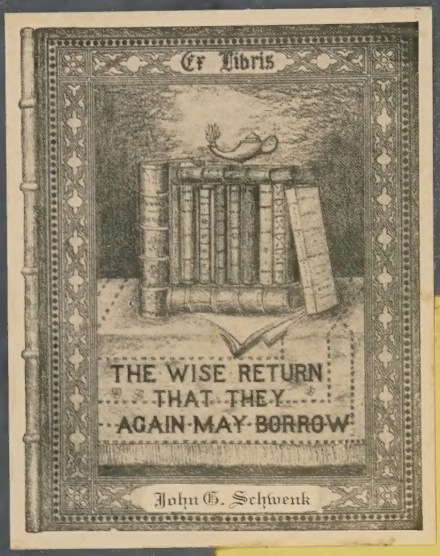
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October 1887

HELEN LINCOLN:

A Tale.

BY

CARRIE CAPRON.

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TO

THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHER,

WHO

"IS NOT, FOR GOD TOOK HIM"

AND TO

MY SISTER,

WHOSE SMILES STILL LIGHTEN LIFE'S PATHWAY,

THIS VOLUME

IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

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HELEN LINCOLN.

CHAPTER I.

"LAND HO!" had been sung out clearly by the watch from the "crow's nest;" the sailors had completed arrangements for going on shore; the signal-gun had sounded over the water, and been answered from the battery; and the merchant ship Argos was smoothly sailing up the bay of New York.

George Lincoln, the owner of the vessel, and his wife were on deck, eager to catch sight, if possible, of some familiar object as they approached their native land, which they had left more than four years before, a happy husband and his youthful bride.

But they returned not in all respects as they left. A light-haired child, of three summers, was standing beside them, and the wife of a hardy tar was near, tossing an infant, and gayly singing the chorus,

"Home, sweet home."

A change had come. These little ones now claimed a portion of that love which before the parents had shared only with each other.

"George," said Mrs. Lincoln, looking up into her husband's face; "they will be long, weary years which I shall spend before I again sail upon this ocean; quite

unlike those which have passed since I became your wife." And she looked down into the blue water, as unconscious of the great waves in the ocean of life as were the gentle ripples of the bay to the heaving of the bosom of the stormy Atlantic.

"Spare such reflections for some idle hour, Mary," said Mr. Lincoln, cheerfully. "Don't you see, we shall have to go on shore in a few minutes? How busy the city seems to be—New York is a whole world in a small compass." These last remarks were made to dispel the gloom which seemed to be gathering over his wife's countenance.

"It may be a whole world," she answered; "but what is one world to me if you are in another?"

"But we are together now," said he, "and I trust many happy days will pass before I say 'Good-by.' Come, cheer up, and let us enjoy the sunshine while we may. It is soon enough to look for storms when clouds begin to gather," and with one kiss he drove away all her thoughts of sorrow.

Reader, were you ever present when a ship poured out its burden after a long sea voyage? If so, you know how impossible it would be to give any just description of the scene. "Going aboard" and "going ashore," are phrases of widely different signification in the sailor's vocabulary. The same ship, the same port, the same faces, and the same hearts, produce very different scenes in the one case from those of the other. Farewell kisses, sundered hearts, bitter tears, waving handkerchiefs, and loved ones fading fast from sight in distance, in the first; signs of recognition, tears of joy, reunion of hearts, and kisses of welcome in the latter. And such were some of the scenes which would enter into a description of the landing of the crew of the Argos. We should see soft lips kissing, and delicate

arms embracing the sunbrowned sons of the sea; and eyes moisten which were undimmed, and stout hearts melted, which were unmoved amid the fury of the ocean's wildest storms.

But let us turn from this picture of hurrying to and fro, and glance at the former history of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, while they are quietly resting at one of the city hotels.

Mr. Lincoln had been the junior partner of a company of East India merchants. By his prudence and industry he had not only reached this position, but had won the regard and confidence of the company. The senior partner was a widower, and the father of Mrs. Lincoln. She was a light-hearted, confiding girl; the idol of a father who had not another relative for whom to live. She had early suffered her affections to fix upon one who seemed to delight in his conquest, but who, all unworthily, had dared to slight and trifle with the holiest principles of our nature; and her heart was well-nigh shattered by the blow. But the broken tendrils of affection cling firmly around the nearest support, and her lacerated heart eagerly admitted the noble and worthy one offered by George Lincoln. But though the wound was healed, the scar was never removed. She was all, however, that her husband could desire, for in the nobleness of her woman's nature she appreciated his love, and the shadow which sometimes clouded life's sunshine was ever banished by his presence.

Since their marriage they had resided in the East Indies, and during their absence, Mary's father had died, the company had been dissolved, and Mr. Lincoln, who had acquired a fine fortune, had determined to enter more deeply into a similar trade upon his own responsibility. He was admirably fitted for such an

enterprise. Just and honorable in all his dealings, he was, nevertheless, a close calculator, and secured for himself, in return, that justice which he administered to others. In his family he threw off the mantle of dignity and reserve which characterized him in his public life, and was ever the affectionate, warm-hearted, loving husband and father. He made his home a "city of refuge," to which he fled for safety from the storms and conflicts of busy life. He had returned to New York to secure to his family those advantages which he deemed desirable, and which could not be enjoyed elsewhere; besides, his present plans, if carried out, would require his presence in that city as often as abroad; and his home there would be as really his home as it could be in India.

"Well, Mary," said Mr. Lincoln to his wife, after she had time to recover from the fatigue of the voyage, and Nellie, the little girl before mentioned, had learned to walk as safely on *terra firma* as she had done on the deck of the Argos, "we have now been nearly a week in New York, and have you experienced that indescribable happiness so often spoken of, arising from the simple fact of being once more in one's native land?"

"Oh, yes," replied she, gayly; "I have been endeavoring to wake up all the patriotic feelings of my nature to-day, but I confess I should have failed, almost entirely, had it not been for nurse, whose raptures seem to have inspired me. She caught sight of an old acquaintance yesterday, and I have heard of little else than the 'dear land' since. Were I a poet, I think I might produce something quite affecting about America and the 'stars and stripes.' Dick has been in two or three times, and seems to have caught his wife's spirit, and has declared this a 'grate counthry entirely, quite equal to ould Ireland.'"

Dick was an Irishman, while his wife was American born, but of Irish parentage. She, nevertheless, retained more of the Irish brogue and Irish habits than many who come to us fresh from the "Emerald Isle." There is, perhaps, an apology due Dick for his enthusiasm at this time. He was one of those husbands who think their wives superior beings; and he was sure the land of her birth was a little beyond the one which cradled his dawning genius. He was a faithful servant to Mr. Lincoln, and his devotion to him now was complete, since, at a previous voyage, he had been allowed to return for his Bridget, who was to be employed as nurse in the family. Six happy months had since passed, and, doubtless, he would have pronounced the "Aste Andase greater entirely" than both America and Ireland, had not Bridget expressed a preference for the second; and he was controlled by one wish, that of making his wife's ideas and opinions his own.

"I am glad," returned Mr. Lincoln, "if you have succeeded at all in your efforts. For my part, I feel a kind of loneliness when I am about town; and here, where I can see you and the children, is the only place where I can feel comfortable. It is nearly ten years since I was here, to remain any length of time, and every thing has changed so much, and I find so few whose acquaintance I can claim, that the name home ill becomes New York."

"Now, George," said his wife, "you have struck a death-blow to all my enthusiasm. If friends and familiar faces must make this city appear home-like, I shall be lonely indeed. I was never here, but always at boarding-school, after my mother's death, which, you know, happened when I was very young; and as soon as I had finished my studies, you took me abroad, and

school-day friendships and acquaintances are soon lost under such circumstances."

"I don't see," said Mr. Lincoln, "but we shall both be obliged to depend upon new acquaintances and new friends for the future; but I hope they will be more lasting than those which our roving lives have permitted us to enjoy in different parts of the world."

"I desire few intimate friends," replied the other, "besides my own family. In their love I can be happy, and I know that Dick would sacrifice every thing but Biddy for our sakes; and I can not feel friendless while two such true, honest hearts beat for us. Come, I 'm determined to *appear* contented, at least."

"Why, Mary," said her husband, cheerfully, "this does my very soul good. I had quite caught the spirit you manifested when we were coming up the Bay; don't you recollect you had a slight attack of the 'blues' while we were standing on deck, just before landing?"

"O, but then I was thinking of the time when I should not have all my family with me," replied his wife, sadly.

"But what did I tell you then," said Mr. Lincoln, beginning to fear the effect his remarks might have upon his wife's feelings. "I thought you had concluded not to borrow trouble hereafter. But why don't you ask me what success I have had in securing a house? I have scoured the city to-day, and have almost come to the determination what I shall do."

"What is it? do tell me," said Mrs. Lincoln, eagerly.

"O, Mary," replied her husband, laughingly, "how easily you are influenced by surrounding circumstances. I hope the world will always treat you kindly, for you would certainly repay it by the manifestation of a happy heart; but I should dread the effect real trouble would

produce upon your sensitive nature. Had I not been fully aware of this disposition, I should, by this time, have had you settled in a house of your own; but I have considered the thing fairly, and have concluded to remain here a fortnight longer in order to secure a more desirable location than any with which we can at present be accommodated."

"I appreciate your kind thoughtfulness, George," replied the wife; "but I am surprised that you have so much trouble in finding a house, when New York appears to be a perfect sea of houses."

"But as one sea contains many fish," said her husband, "so is New York filled with people. It is a very difficult matter to find a dwelling at this season of the year. Next month will be moving time here, and the residence I have engaged will not be vacated until then. It is a little removed from the busy part of town, the air around it seems purer than the air here, and the in-door arrangements are just suited to your taste."

"Plase, sir," interrupted Bridget, who had entered with the children, and overheard the latter part of the last sentence, "is it the house ye 're spakin' of?"

"Yes, Biddy," replied Mr. Lincoln; "I have engaged a very pleasant house, and I expect you will be mistress of our domestic affairs."

"I 'll be that very same, sir," said Bridget, with a mingled expression of pride and thankfulness. "It 's your faithful sarvant I 've been since I came to ye, and it 's a gintleman ye 've been to me; and—sparin' her presence—there 's not a finer lady than the one ye have, in all Ameriky. Bad luck to the wind that blows hard on aither of ye!"

"I shall have an American girl to teach Nellie," continued Mr. Lincoln. "She must begin to learn a

little now, and then you will be much relieved from the care of both of the children. There is a fine room for a nursery in the house."

"Plase, sir," said Bridget, "where is it?"

"On the first floor," replied Mr. Lincoln.

"But it 's the house itself I was askin' afther," said Bridget; "sure, we 'll be making a nursery of whichever room we like."

Mr. Lincoln described the location, and Bridget (who was well acquainted with the different parts of the city) readily understood where their future home was situated, and declared it to be the "very same she was dhraming they could n't get. And ye 'll be goin' from this directly?" she continued.

"Not yet," replied Mr. Lincoln, "we can not take possession under a fortnight."

"It 's me own dhreams that are always true ones," said Bridget, in a satisfied tone of voice; "but I 'm plased it 's not for not at all that ye can 't get it; it 'll be grate style we 'll be livin' in there; and why not, to be sure? there 's not more of a gintleman in New York than yourself, and, begging your pardon, sir, it 's meself that knows best how to take care of such a place."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Dick, who came to announce that the owner of the house which Mr. Lincoln had engaged was in the reading-room, and would like to make out the papers necessary to complete the bargain.

During his absence, Mrs. Lincoln and Bridget busied themselves unpacking trunks, and making their rooms more comfortable, since their stay in them was to be protracted.

Mr. Lincoln took a lease of the house for four years,

securing the privilege of purchasing it at any time, should it fully meet their expectations and wishes.

The sun of prosperity shone brightly around his pathway, and, nurtured in the warmth of its rays, the flowers of hope grew and flourished.

CHAPTER II.

It was to no house, dreary by its emptiness, that Mary Lincoln was removed from the lodgings where we last saw her. There was no dreaded household settlement to be accomplished, no thoughtful planning for convenience to be encountered. The hand of faithfulness and industry had been busily at work there before her delicate feet pressed the marble steps which lay at the entrance. On the grate in the drawing-room, a few half-smothered coals had been placed to remove the chilliness of May weather; two richly ornamented gas-burners were bidding defiance to nature's darkness; and Biddy's cheerful face was there, annihilating all feeling of estrangement, and like an expected guest, she was welcomed, just at evening, to her home, by all that wealth and love could procure, and the soft lips of that thankful wife pressed upon her husband's cheek the acknowledgment of a gratitude they were unable to express by words.

Love, and love only, is the price for love—and Mr. Lincoln found in his once heart-drooping Mary, new wells of affection continually springing up; for she best knows the value of a true heart who has felt the treachery of the inconstant.

"It 's a lucky pair ye are," said Bridget, who, having drawn a *tête-à-tête* near the fire for Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, seated herself in a chair beside them; for though she would, at any time, assert the kitchen or nursery to be her proper place, she never felt out of place in

the parlor when there was no company present; "there is very few that 's fit as yerselves to be lucky. Ye can tell a gintleman that 's not a gintleman, as far as ye can see him," she continued.

"Biddy's ideas of aristocracy are developing, I imagine," said Mr. Lincoln to his wife. Then turning to Bridget, he asked, "What do you mean by a 'gentleman who is not a gentleman?'"

"Him that 's not born a gentleman," said Bridget, promptly; "like the big man next door to ye, sir."

"Who is he? do you know him?" asked Mr. Lincoln.

"'Tis the squire, sir," she replied; "the very same that was a poor man, no smarther than me own Dick, ten years ago."

"What 's his name?" asked the other.

"Squire Doxtather, sure," said Bridget; "the very same we used to call Jack Doxtather."

"Well, is n't he a gentleman, Bridget, because he was once poor? I was once a very poor orphan boy, and you call me a gentleman."

"Ah!" said Bridget, with a significant turn of the head, "he has not the face of a gintleman, and it 's unmannerly, very, to be standin', as he has done, all this week at the back window, watching every thing ye sent to the house, sir. Afther ye get acquaint in the neighborhood yerself, ye 'll find what I say to be true; it 's not the money and the fine house makes the gintleman entirely, though ye can't be one without them."

Bridget's untutored mind was filled with both truth and error. While she acknowledged the foolish belief that wealth was one of the requisites of a gentleman, she knew that its possession alone was insufficient to secure the title. She had marked the wide difference between the man boasting only riches, and the pos-

sessor of those virtues which constitute the real gentleman, and which are the promptings of a pure and generous heart.

Mr. Lincoln's home was truly the abode of affluence, ease, and, it may justly be added, of happiness; for education, refinement, and love, were mingled in the cup of its joy.

Weeks had passed by, and more than one richly-equipped carriage had rolled away from the door of this dwelling, bearing the gay, the beautiful, and the fortunate. Mr. Lincoln was becoming known among business men, and every attention was paid to himself and to his family. His name was fast becoming familiar in the first circles; and society already acknowledged him one of its brightest ornaments. There is a homage which the world renders to the wealthy, of which the righteous poor are ignorant; there are friendships, bought with the glitter of gold, which will not endure trial in the furnace of adversity; there are hearts which echo only those which beat beneath costly robes; and there are the great, which are not the good of earth. But who shall read the untried heart? who scorn the smile which lights the stranger's face?

So confiding and cheerful did Mrs. Lincoln appear to her visitors, that she did not fail to win the admiration of all, and city life did not prove to her what it has to many who have lived years alone amid its multitude of inhabitants. Bridget's pride and delight were unbounded. She seemed to live for the interests of her employers, and she felt herself equally honored with them in all these attentions. She had seen Fashion's most loyal subjects cast glances of admiration upon the elegant furniture, when she led them into the reception-room, and she had noticed the expression of satisfaction and pleasure which such manifested when they parted

with the lady, who was to all the greatest attraction of her home.

One pleasant day, while Mrs. Lincoln was in the nursery enjoying the company of her children, Bridget entered. A cloud darkened the bright sunlight of her countenance, as she handed Mrs. Lincoln a card, saying—"'Tis from a lady below, ma'am; could I say ye are busy with the children?"

"Oh, no! I will go down immediately," answered the other; at the same time glancing at the card, she read the name, "Mrs. J. Doxtater."

"I told her," continued Bridget, "ye was in the nursery, but I'd go for ye, and any raal lady would have excused ye, I'm sure."

"Why should I be excused, Biddy?" said Mrs. Lincoln, a little surprised; then suddenly recollecting Bridget's remark about her neighbor, she perceived the cause of this displeasure, and went immediately to meet her visitor.

The door of the nursery, which Mrs. Lincoln had left open, was unobserved by Bridget, who was relating her vexation to Sarah Pease (a young girl who had taken her place in the nursery), and little Nellie, following her mother, soon appeared in the parlor. Mrs. Doxtater was delighted with the child, and was telling her of her own little "Lulu," as she called her, who, she said, was just about her age; and Nellie, whose confidence and acquaintance with the stranger was established by the offer of a bright silver card-case, was, in her childish way, accepting an invitation to come and play with Lulu, when Bridget, in a state of great excitement, entered, and taking Nellie by the hand, apologized, saying,

"'T was a great mistake, sure, the child's straying in this way."

"She gets very tired of the nursery, Biddy," said the mother, "I would n't take her back just now;" and Bridget, very reluctantly, left her enjoying Mrs. Doxtater s society, and hastened back to finish her conversation with Sarah.

Nellie told Mrs. Doxtater of her little sister, and begged her to "come and see it," and after a somewhat protracted call, that lady (obedient to Nellie's importunities) followed Mrs. Lincoln to the nursery to see the baby. Baby gave, first a wondering stare, then a half-conscious smile, and finally, sucking its thumb contentedly, manifested its perfect satisfaction with the stranger.

Mrs. Doxtater declared she had had a most delightful call, begged that the families might be neighborly, and left; not, however, without the conviction that Mrs. Lincoln's waiting-maid was uncommonly rough, or she never could have made the noise she did in shutting the door after a visitor.

"She 's no discretion, ma'am," said Bridget to Mrs. Lincoln, as soon as Mrs. Doxtater was fairly away; "its great presumption to be goin' all over a lady's house the first time ye 're in it."

"She appears to be very sociable, Biddy," replied Mrs. Lincoln, "and seems to wish to be friendly."

"The very same, ma'am, I 'll warrant," replied the other. "She 'd like to be friendly with a lady like ye. Did ye know her of old, as I do, ye 'd not wonder at what I am spakin' to ye."

"And do you dislike her so much simply because she was once poor?" asked Mrs. Lincoln.

"That 's not it at all, ma'am," replied Bridget. "It is a good woman she was, sure, when she was poor; 't is the money, ma'am, has been the spilin' of her; sure, she was as polite to meself as to any lady of ye,

then; but she's lost the memory of me now. But for ye're sake I'd have told her, this is ye're ould acquaintaince, Bridget McCarthy! 'T is the pride, ma'am, the money brings out, I'm despisin'."

Mrs. Doxtater, disregarding parental advice, had married, in early life, John Doxtater, a worthless fellow; and the crowning days of her youth had been spent in the society of the uneducated and unrefined. She had well-nigh thrown from her all natural enterprise, and was fast sinking, not to the depths of the vicious low, but far below the position which, by a little effort, she might have maintained. Her husband was the nephew of a wealthy lawyer, a bachelor, and agreeably to his wishes had several times commenced the study of the law, but his lack of energy, together with the consciousness of his own poverty and seeming worthlessness, would soon overcome his better resolutions, and he was likely to become a miserable beggar. Just at this crisis the uncle died, leaving his whole fortune to his nephew, provided he would resume his studies, persevere, and become a practicing lawyer.

Fired with a new ambition, "Jack," strong in the belief of the old aphorism, "Never too old to learn," commenced his studies eagerly. His perseverance, certainly, was commendable; his wife, too, aroused from the lethargy into which she had settled, and, being addicted to no vices, unless indolence be ranked a vice, her ambition was soon satisfied. Ten years had rolled away since the uncle's death, and the family of J. Doxtater, Esq., moved freely in the wealthy circle of New York aristocracy. But the transition from penury to affluence often proves too much for human pride to endure becomingly; and so was it with this family. Measuring worth by dollars, they looked with contempt upon their old, and less fortunate associates,

and by their haughtiness and arrogance rendered themselves despicable to all save kindred natures, numbers of whom they were never troubled to find.

Without the key to the lady's character which Biddy had given, Mrs. Lincoln would have found little trouble in reading it. Every action revealed the truth of the assertion that, "she was not bred a lady." She had expressed great surprise that Mrs. Lincoln "was satisfied with her servants," and said that for her part, she was tormented to death with her own, and had sometimes almost concluded she would have to go into the kitchen herself. She had held a long conversation upon the latest styles, the prices of the hats worn by some of her acquaintances, the last novel, and the merits of the opera. By such means she hoped to establish herself in the friendship and estimation of Mrs. Lincoln.

"Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and mislead the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride—that never failing vice of fools."

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Lincoln, as we have before seen, had come to New York entirely released from the incumbrance of business in the East Indies. Though his determination to return was fixed, his plans, at the time of his coming, were not fully complete. He had no partner, and had almost concluded that, with his own capital, he should be able to do a profitable business without one. His mind and time were much occupied with these affairs, and he was less than usual in the company of his family. Thus far in life he had been a persevering business man; he had already reaped the certain reward of such labor; and the success which he had attained was like fuel to the fire of the ambition which had always prompted him.

After weeks of deliberation upon the subject, he finally decided to establish two trading houses—one in the city, and the other at Calcutta—and immediately commenced collecting a stock of goods for transportation thither. It was the design of Mr. Lincoln to again visit India, establish and arrange matters there, and leave the business in the hands of an agent. He accordingly secured the services of a gentleman a little his senior, but one upon whose early efforts fortune had not seemed to dawn with as much promise as it had upon his own, and one whose present prosperity was wholly owing to the company with which he had recently been engaged. Though this friend was now placed in more than comfortable circumstances, Mr.

Lincoln felt that the enterprise in which he was about to engage him, would prove far more profitable than the one in which his efforts were at present being spent. After the completion of these arrangements, it was his design to return and occupy himself mostly in New York, visiting India only occasionally.

After arriving definitely at these conclusions, a burden seemed to be rolled from his mind and heart, and he hastened to inform his wife of his intentions. She had lived in a suspense, more painful than could possibly be felt by her husband; for she had a true wife's heart, which feels more sensibly the interests of the object of her affections, than man is able to feel his own. A woman's love is unselfish; and only he who has lived in such love can know aught of its power, and he only who has felt it knows how powerless are words to describe it. There is, too, in woman's nature, a consciousness of weakness; not a weakness which renders her inferior to him upon whom she looks as the stronger; not a weakness, which, when admitted, in the least infringes upon her heaven-born "rights;" not a weakness which conflicts with her boldly asserting and enjoying these sacred rights; nor yet a weakness, on account of which, in the eyes both of mankind and righteous Heaven, she is regarded as any less than the greatest of God's creatures;—but an inability to endure the rougher toils and conflicts of busy life; and she naturally shrinks back from these, and looks for a protector upon whom she may lean safely. So was it with the gentle wife of Mr. Lincoln. She had trembled even at the thought that a long separation from him, her support, might become necessary. But while she felt and acknowledged such a weakness, she had a consciousness of a greater strength than his. She felt strong in a love that could conquer and subdue his

noble nature—strong in the power to fix and temper his heart—and strong to shed, by her pure affection, a sunlight over his pathway amid the darkest storms of life; who moulds in quiet homes the heart of man, works nobler, mightier deeds in the world's great battle-field, than all the mere material engines in the strife.

"And must you go so soon?" said Mrs. Lincoln, after her husband had communicated to her his decision.

"Just as soon as I can possibly get off," he replied.

A sigh was all the answer Mrs. Lincoln gave. Her husband observed this, and said, cheerfully, "The sooner I go, the sooner I shall return. Come, Mary, you must forget the farewell, and look beyond, to the meeting." But the farewell must needs come first, and like a dark mountain, it hid all the bright light of the future, to which he strove to direct her attention. "A few months," he continued, "will soon slip away; and I think you can make the time pass very pleasantly, now that you have a number of acquaintances; and, besides, the children are about the best of company; and then, too, you can be looking to a time, not far distant, when I shall be settled at home."

"I know that is the way to *talk*," said the wife, smiling through her tears; "but it is not the way I can *feel*, after all."

Mr. Lincoln could but acknowledge the truth of this; he had *said* it manfully, but his firmness reeled when he brought the matter home, as she said, to his feelings.

"I have heard it remarked," continued Mrs. Lincoln, "that we do not know how dear to us our friends are until we have lost them; and I begin to believe it is true. The very thought of separation makes you seem dearer; and when you are really gone," she added,

rather jestingly, "I don't know but I may die of love."

A strange, indescribable sensation had taken possession of Mr. Lincoln, and he sat silently, as if endeavoring to analyze his emotions. Philosophy failed to satisfy him, and a tell-tale tear came glistening in his eye, and mirrored there the thoughts he strove to hide. He was a man unused to weep, for he was strong in that power which rules the tenderest sentiments of our nature.

The tear was quickly noticed by Nellie, who had, almost unobserved, climbed upon his knees, and she inquired, sadly, "Papa, what makes you cry?"

Is sorrow calmed? ask if it rests; and how quickly is it roused! So with Nellie's papa. Her childish inquiry had burst open the whole fountain of his tears, and he wept.

Little Nellie looked wonderingly at her parents; and either catching the spirit of their grief, or fearing that her question might have been the cause of this grief, she cried aloud.

Roused by her cries, Mr. Lincoln wiped away his tears, and laughing at what he styled his "folly," he began tossing the child, and said, "We shall have to thank mamma for all this, sha'n't we, Nellie?"

The sorrows of childhood are transient; and Nellie's little face was soon wreathed in smiles. She really felt like "thanking mamma," for she then enjoyed a longer play with her father than she had been permitted to do in many weeks. She had drawn him into the nursery, and "baby" was sharing, equally, the sport, and adding her part to the fun, by chuckling, laughing, and crowing. Just in the midst of their glee, Mr. Lincoln kissed the trio lovingly, and after a cheerful "good-by," hastened "down town."

The afternoon passed pleasantly away, the cloud

which had gathered at noon-day was gone, and the sinking sun seemed to shine more brightly than usual. Sarah declared the children perfectly unmanageable—"Mr. Lincoln had made them so wild;" and when tea-time came, little Nellie stood on a chair by the window, her plump cheek pressed against one of the panes, striving to see as far down the street as possible, in order to catch the first glimpse of her father when he should return.

Mrs. Lincoln, whose sensitive nature made her the victim of circumstances, had participated somewhat in the merriment of the children, and in nothing more than an occasional appearance of thoughtfulness did she manifest the presence of trouble; and when her husband returned, he was greeted, not only by the clapping of Nellie's hands, and her happy smiles, but by the smiles of his wife, whose face was as bright and cheerful as a May morning.

After tea, and when the little ones had been full half an hour in "dreamland," Mr. Lincoln was seated in his easy chair, examining the "Daily," when his wife interrupted him by asking, "George, how long is 'as soon as possible?'"

Mr. Lincoln smiled, and expressed his idea that the question was rather indefinite.

"About as indefinite as the length of time denoted by the expression, is to me," said the other; "but to be a little more definite, how long before you think of going to India? You said this morning 'as soon as possible,' and I have no idea of the time when you intend to leave."

"As early as week after next, Mary," said the husband.

"As early as week after next!" she repeated. "And how long do you think you shall be gone?"

"It is impossible for me to say," Mr. Lincoln replied;

"but I can safely put the time between ten and twelve months, and that time will slip away almost unnoticed. I shall write you by every opportunity, and shall think of you always."

Mrs. Lincoln's mind glanced into the future, and the twelve months looked long, and dark, and dreary; but summoning all the fortitude she could command, she inquired if Dick was to be taken on this voyage.

"Oh, yes," said her husband; "he is my chief dependence, and so devoted to me and the ship, that I doubt whether I could induce him to remain at home, did I choose to leave him."

"Has he told Biddy he was going?" asked the other.

"I think not," replied Mr. Lincoln; "he will probably do so this evening."

"I have tried not to think of the matter since you told me your determination, and so have not spoken to her on the subject," said Mrs. Lincoln. "She is very different from me; she has been expecting it ever since we came; and, I think, will not be moved in the least by the intelligence. But I have been hoping you would give up your old ideas, and not think of going abroad again."

"I have thought of it," said the husband; "but the India trade has never been more profitable than it is at this time, and, with my acquaintace and experience in the business, it would seem like folly for me to settle down here."

Is it strange that the same hearts which melted, but a few short hours ago, at the thought of separation, could so soon appear hardened to a seeming indifference on the same subject?—strange, that Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, at evening, so calmly spoke words which, in the morning, they were unable to speak or hear! As in nature, calms succeed storms, so in hearts, the storm of feeling sinks at length into the quiet rest of reason.

CHAPTER IV.

The good ship Argos having been thoroughly repaired, was again freighted with the wealth of its owner. The sturdy tars were at their posts, and in a few hours they were to "weigh" anchor and be rocked on the breast of the broad Atlantic. There was but one thing left undone by Mr. Lincoln and Dick, but this one rested with more weight on their minds than had all the other arrangements. It was to say that simple word, "good-by."

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln stood locked in each other's embrace. There was a sad silence in the room—they were alone! The stanger seldom intrudes in scenes like this—and it is not ours to linger here. We may not cross the threshold of the home of another's love. True, we may stand outside and catch some manifestations of its power. We may weep when others weep, and strive to share their griefs; but, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," and beareth its own sorrow; and we may never tell the feelings which prompted those kisses, melted those eyes, and heaved those bosoms. If flowers seemed thrown over this farewell, they were the roses of present prosperity and hope; but the hands which held the blossoms were clasping thorny stems!

Poor Dick had an affectionate heart, and it beat as truly for Bridget as did that of his employer for his own gentle Mary; and there was as severe a rending of the cords of affection in the one case as in the other.

But Dick had never learned that silence is the language of deep emotion. He felt bound to express exactly what, and all he suffered, and when language failed, and words seemed entirely exhausted, he would wring and shake his hands as if eager to drive from the ends of his fingers the expression of sensations, which, doubtless, he experienced, even there.

Bridget took the separation more philosophically. She looked upon the grief of her employers as truly becoming, but a like affection she thought had, or should have no place in Dick's breast. "It was silly, indade," she declared, "to be takin' on at that rate. Poor people could n't expect to be always together;" while Dick, admitting by word his wife's assertion, still felt an uncontrollable belief to the contrary.

Mr. Lincoln, after remaining as long as the time would admit, kissed his wife and little ones, and hastily leaving the room, breathed fervently, not the abbreviation, but the entire parting blessing; "God be with you." This was the first soul-felt prayer which had risen from the altar of his maturer years. This was the first time he had ever truly felt its need, and as he hastened along the streets of the busy city on his way to the wharf, he as fervently and as truly sent up his own heart an offering to Him who has said, "He that cometh unto me I will no wise cast out."

About an hour after Mr. Lincoln left his home, a messenger came to the door with a note for Mrs. Lincoln. She knew quickly the hand-writing, and opening it, read thus:

"Dearest Mary—I have not left you alone. *Look upward*, and you will find a truer friend than I know how to be, who will never leave you.

"Tell Nellie of Jesus, that she may know, in her

earliest years, that wisdom of which her parents have, until now, been ignorant. I shall lay my treasures at His feet, and do not you withhold the offering.

"We must be off—'Good-by'—you shall ever live in the heart and prayers of your loving husband,

"GEORGE LINCOLN."

Was Mrs. Lincoln dreaming! again and again did she review the contents of the note. No, she could not be mistaken. She forgot her tears, and a feeling of strange surprise took away all her thoughts of the parting. She did "look upward," but it was with a faithless, wondering glance. Her confidence was given wholly to him who had just left her, and she had no wish to share it with another. She could not think of her husband as a Christian, and she strove to banish the thought, and remember him only as the noble man of the world whom she had so easily learned to love. How strange that her tender heart, softened as it now appeared, was thus insensible to that richer love which had been offered to her. Did she fear that in setting her affections on things above, she should rob the objects of those affections here? No! She knew that she as truly lived now in the love of him who had just made an offering of that love to that Being who is the fountain of it, as she had ever done before. She felt powerless to make such an offering, and she shrank from what she deemed so difficult a task. O! sin-blinded one! Has Heaven demanded what thou canst not give? Unrighteous thought! It is thine to guide the purpose of thy life, and mold thy will! Just guide and mold as Heaven directs, and Heaven is thine!

The day was bright and cloudless, the surface of the ocean was undisturbed save by a quiet heaving, as if forced to rest, while below the "storm-king" vainly

strove to excite an angry war. The sails of the Argos were spread to the breeze, and like a white-winged bird, she darted, trustingly, far out upon the bosom of the broad, deep sea, richly laden with the wealth of earth and the wealth of hearts.

Bridget and Nellie became now, more than ever, the companions of Mrs. Lincoln. There was a light as well as a dark side to her feelings, and she found it very pleasant to forget her sad thoughts of the absent, and to enter cheerfully into the gay society of these. Nellie was an uncommonly bright child, and Bridget had often declared her head "too knowin' for the shoulders which bore it." It was a difficult task to confine her to the nursery; the whole house scarcely afforded sufficient field for her unrestrained wanderings; besides, she had a thorough aversion to Sarah Pease, whose pettish kind of discipline was naturally displeasing to children. She was fond of her book, if her mother taught her the letters, but the regular hour for instruction wore tardily away when Sarah acted in the capacity of teacher.

The day following her father's departure, after she had been repeating the alphabet to her mother, who greatly encouraged her efforts by assuring her that she was a good girl, and read very well, she looked up, and exclaimed, delightedly, "I can read papa's letter now, I guess."

Her mother drew the note from her pocket, and explained to Nellie, as well as she was able, the difference between written and printed letters, and told her it would be a long time before she could read writing.

"I will not wait so long," said the child; "I will hear mamma read it."

Mrs. Lincoln, confident that she was too young to understand what it contained, rather reluctantly began

reading the contents. When she came to the sentence, "Tell Nellie of Jesus," her voice trembled, and the child interrupted her by saying, "Mamma did not tell Nellie. I do not know who is Jesus."

Her mother, struggling with her own emotions, and endeavoring to reconcile her conduct in the eyes of her child, replied, "Oh, yes, He is God. Mamma has told you that He made you, and little sister, and all the people in the world; don't you remember now, Nellie?"

"Yes; I do remember," said Nellie, thoughtfully; "but I did not know that Jesus is God. What for did papa want mamma to tell me?"

"Because He makes little children good, and papa wishes to have Nellie good," answered Mrs. Lincoln; and she continued reading the letter, hoping in this way to divert the child's attention, for she had no desire to continue such a conversation; but no sooner had she finished than that same little voice asked—

"Mamma, how does Jesus God make me good?"

"You will know when you are older," said the mother, conscious of her incapacity to answer the question.

"Does mamma know?" again interrogated the child; and, almost involuntarily, the mother answered, "Yes."

"Please, mamma, tell Nellie," said the little girl, imploringly.

Mrs. Lincoln told her that she could not understand.

"I will try very hard," said Nellie; and after the assurance of the uselessness of such an effort, she answered, sadly, "I do wish I was older now!"

How sweet to the Christian mother would have been the task of pointing Nellie's inquiring mind to that Saviour of whom she so much desired to know! to im-

part to her, even in her tender years, a knowledge, which, if then acquired, could mould for good her future life; a knowledge, which, rightly to possess, the aged must become as little children. It was not that Mrs. Lincoln's love was the less for Nellie that she refused to enlighten her, but it was a consciousness of her own ignorance and inability to instruct another in a way in which she herself had never learned.

But Nellie was not without one godly friend. Disappointed at not being able to learn more from her mother, she wandered into the kitchen, and climbing into a chair beside the table, where Dinah, the cook, was rolling cakes for supper, she asked, "Di"—for so she called her—"how does Jesus God make me a good girl?"

Dinah was a whole-souled Methodist; one through whose lips the pious "Amen" is sent involuntarily from the heart, and whose whole being is renewed by the single word, "Glory." For more than twenty years she had been taught of God, and she was pleased to tell Nellie all she could, of her heavenly Master.

"De way is," she said, "for Nellie to pray eb'ry day, and God will send de Spirit into de heart, and de heart will want to be good, and Nellie will be just de way her heart want to be."

Dinah's theology was simple, but it reached far beyond the child's comprehension.

"I do not know how to pray," she said.

"De way is to kneel down by de cha'r, and look up to de sky, and ax for de t'ing you wants, and you will hab it," said Dinah.

"Does Jesus God stay up in the sky all the time?" inquired Nellie, looking through the window up into the blue heaven.

"Yes," said Dinah; "that is his home; you alers find him dar."

"No, Di," said the child, beginning to doubt the cook's word; "I can not see him anywhere."

"O, you neber can see him till you die," answered Dinah; "but he can see you all the time."

"Too bad," ejaculated Nellie; "I wish I could see Jesus God."

Yes, and you shall see Him before you die, little Nellie, by the eye of faith, and know Him, as He is, if as earnestly and honestly you seek a little longer! It is true, He sees you always; and the sweet incense wafted from the altar of your little heart, rises acceptably before His throne, and even now He loves you. He tenderly watches over the lambs of His flock.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, the week previous to the departure of Mr. Lincoln, had accepted an invitation to dine at Mr. Doxtater's, and their visit had afforded them no little insight into the character of their neighbors. It was very evident that Mrs. Doxtater was anxious to establish an intimacy between the families, quite beyond their wishes; and it was still more evident that her demonstrative friendship was based upon no firmer foundation than the respect she cherished for wealth and fashion. She saw that ere long they must hold, what she considered, a most enviable position in society, and she hoped, by associating with them, to share in their honor, forgetting that the lesser star is often entirely obscured by its nearness to one of superior magnitude. Her attentions, though received in a manner not calculated to encourage an intimacy, were not harshly repulsed; and a kind, formal friendship was all that she seemed able to secure. She promised to be a sister to Mrs. Lincoln during the absence of her husband; and Mr. Doxtater assured Mr. Lincoln that he would make his family as much his care as he did his own.

All attentions to little Nellie, however, were most happily received by the artless child, and through her, Mrs. Doxtater was able to secure what she so much desired, the reputation of being the particular friend of the new comers. Lulu seldom went to ride unaccompanied by Nellie, for without an appearance of un-

graciousness on the part of Mrs. Lincoln, she could not refuse to allow her to go. Lulu's visits were frequent, and the children were becoming very fond of each other's society. Biddy's vexation was unbounded, and but for the politeness which Mrs. Lincoln insisted was due from her, she would have speedily ended all intercourse between the families.

One pleasant morning Mrs. Doxtater's nurse appeared at the door with Lulu, and requested Nellie's company to take a short walk. The footways were clean and dry, the air was uncommonly refreshing, and the exercise of walking would have proved really healthful to the children, but Mrs. Lincoln declined letting Nellie go, telling the nurse that Lulu would need all her attention while walking, and that she would not trouble her with the care of Nellie. Besides, Sarah would soon go out with the baby and she could ride with her.

Nellie heard this, and prefering Lulu's society to that of the less companionable baby, cried out, angrily, "I will not ride, I will walk with Lulu!"

Mrs. Lincoln was astonished. She had never heard such words in her family before, and she had never even dreamed that such a spirit might dwell in the breast of her gentle child. Taking the little one upon her lap she asked,

"What was that you said to mamma, Nellie?"

"I said, I will not ride," she answered, sobbing, and struggling to free herself from her mother's grasp.

This was the first intimation she had ever given that she had a will, and Mrs. Lincoln rightly determined, at once, to subdue it. When the storm of passion had subsided, she asked Nellie where she had heard such words.

"Lulu says so," said Nellie, and immediately her

mother saw how unguarded she had been in allowing her to associate with that child. In her anger she had used the words "I will" and "I won't," very freely, where she had been accustomed to say, mildly, "I had rather not." Dinah, attracted by her cries, had witnessed this scene, and looking as if she believed her convert had suddenly fallen from grace, said,

"De Lord Jesus neber gib you dat spirit, Nellie; dat come from de ebil one hisself."

Mrs. Doxtater, in rising from low to high life, had not cultivated in her family the true spirit of refinement, and she, most certainly, did not naturally possess it. It often dwells in its greatest purity in the cottages of the humble poor, while many who make it their boast know little of it. In mingling with this family Nellie had often heard language which but ill becomes those bound to each other by kindred ties. True, Lulu was young, but from her brother, older than herself, she quickly caught, and learned to use, expressions which rendered her an unsafe companion for Nellie, and even now, Mrs. Lincoln found that a long time would be required to undo the evil which had already been done. That Nellie experienced a feeling of humiliation before those who had witnessed her manifestation of anger, was very evident. She went from one to the other seemingly more anxious than ever to appear kind and gentle. She was soon re-instated in Bridget's favor, who was really pleased that she had thus offended, for she was sure that Mrs. Lincoln would now agree with her in utterly rejecting the society of the Doxtaters. But with Dinah, who strove to look upon sin as God views it, Nellie found some difficulty in effecting the desired reconciliation.

"Please, Di, forgive Nellie," she said, beseechingly.

But Dinah said, "Di can not do dat—dat be de work ob de Lor' Jesus."

"Did Jesus see me?" asked Nellie, sorrowfully.

"He see you all de time when you was naughty," said Dinah; "and He will not lub naughty children."

"Then I will not love Jesus any more," said the child, in an angry tone.

"O! Missy Nellie," exclaimed Dinah, "dat must be a berry wicked heart in you. You should pray de Lor' Jesus to make you good, and love him better and better eb'ry day."

"No; I will not," persisted Nellie.

Dinah looked horrified at the little backslider, and begged her to ask God to forgive her.

"He can not hear me, 'way up in the sky," answered Nellie, somewhat softened by Dinah's importunity.

"O yes, he can hear eb'ry t'ing you speak," said Dinah, a little more hopefully.

And with this assurance, Nellie looked up where she had learned that God dwelt, and said, "Please, God forgive me, and make me a good girl, and I will not do so any more."

Dinah, trusting at least to her own faith, on the wings of which she was certain Nellie's prayer had entered the ear of Him who is more ready to hear than His children are to ask, looked upon the reclaimed little one with feelings of true thankfulness. But her joy was destined to be of short duration. About the middle of the afternoon she was singing, happily, her favorite hymn—

> "Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone,
> O, I'm bound for the land of Canaan"—

when little Nellie came bounding into the kitchen, and,

with an appearance of triumph, exclaimed, "Now, Di, you lie!"

Poor Dinah was thunderstruck. She had never, in the least, doubted her "title clear to mansions in the skies," and Nellie was not old enough to think of such things. What could the child mean? While these thoughts were rushing through her mind, and before she had time to speak, Nellie continued, "God did not make me good girl," and Dinah's own faith in her assertion beginning to be somewhat confirmed, replied, "Dat is consid'able of a charge you bring 'g'inst Dinah; please 'splain yourself, Missy Nelly."

"Because mamma tells me I am a very naughty girl," said the other, putting out her foot, and displaying a little bronzed gaiter which she had just cut, with the scissors, half way down to the toe.

"Dat is very true," said Dinah, feeling somewhat relieved, "and what Dinah told you is just de same true; de Lor' Jesus allers help dem to be good what tries to help demselves. You know'd bery well de scissors was not for you to play wid; and dat was a bery naughty word you say to Dinah."

Dinah and Nellie, after a little time, ended their conversation very amicably. Nellie never after doubted "Di's" assertion, nor did she again use the word which had so shocked the pious cook. She loved to listen to Dinah's Bible stories; and though she could comprehend but little of their meaning, their influence over her soon became perceptible.

In Bridget's eyes, Nellie was innocent; for Lulu bore the burden of all her failings; and when she made use of some wicked or coarse expression, Biddy would exclaim, exultingly, "That comes, ma'am, from playing with Lulu."

Although this association could not be broken off di-

rectly without giving offence, Mrs. Lincoln expressed a wish to Mrs. Doxtater that the children should be less together, giving, as her reason, that both were becoming quite unmanageable, and even troublesome, when separated; and when Lulu came again to visit Nellie, though she was received kindly, a mother's watchful eye was constantly upon them in their play.

CHAPTER VI.

There was in the second story of Mr. Lincoln's house a corner room, the window on one side of which was toward the ocean, and the view from it was almost unbroken for many miles in that direction; while on the other side lay the busy city. This room was the favorite resort of Mrs. Lincoln. Here she sat for hours together, and while her eye drank in the prospect, bright pictures played upon her mental vision, and she saw—far beyond, where the oceans of earth and sky seemed to mingle into one—those loved Islands, the happy home of her adoption, the cradle of the first breathings of maternal love in her breast, and the spot toward which the idol of her heart was then fast approaching. Sometimes she watched the sun rise, and felt that the long streaks of light which shot across sea and sky were not unlike the bright rays which cheered her own nature, reflections from the sun of her affections which had disappeared in that same direction; and sometimes she would look out into the deep darkness, and delight in the thought that, as truly as the returning morrow would be heralded by the glorious king of day, so a bright morrow should dawn on her loneliness; and she grieved only that the night was so long in wearing away. There is a food on which the heart feeds, which, for the time, may gratify and please, but nourished only by this, it ere long becomes sickened and surfeited. Sometimes she would look out of the other window, upon

the great thoroughfare of life which was there spread before her view; and as she watched the contest of worldly interests, and listened to the tumult and noise of business, she almost sighed for a heart-world where such contests and such tumults might never enter.

Mr. Lincoln had been absent from his family more than three weeks, and his wife was daily looking for intelligence from him. She watched, anxiously, the penny-post boy as he dropped regularly the paper at the door, and her eager eyes ran quickly over the "marine list," for she hoped, at least, to see the Argos noticed as "spoken" by some of the returned vessels.

A heavy "blow" had been experienced, and several ships near the coast had been disabled, but the account did not in the least excite her fears, and the subject had well-nigh been banished from her thoughts. One morning, while occupying her favorite seat at the window, she noticed Mr. Doxtater coming from the town. He was reading the morning paper with an earnestness which attracted her attention. Besides, it was an unusual hour for him to be returning, and she quickly conjectured that important intelligence was contained in the paper. He hesitated a moment before the door of Mrs. Lincoln's house, looked toward the window, and then walked rapidly home. Her first impulse was to follow him, but, recollecting herself, she wondered why she had even thought of so doing. Her suspense, though it had not yet become tedious or painful, had, imperceptibly to herself, quickened her sensibilities, and by what motives she was actuated, she knew not. In a moment after Mr. Doxtater had passed, the newsboy ran up the steps, and, pulling the bell, dropped the paper, and lingered on the walk until Bridget had opened the door and taken it. Mrs. Lincoln observed

this, and she flew hastily down stairs, and snatching it from Bridget, opened it, and read these words:

"Arrival of the Henry. Accounts of further disasters during the late storm. Loss of the merchant ship Argos. The whole crew lost."

There were no tears for Mrs. Lincoln's eyes, nor had she words to tell poor Bridget that she, too, was a widow. She sank unconscious to the floor. Bridget and Dinah were making every effort to resuscitate her, when Mr. and Mrs. Doxtater entered. Neglecting the usual formality of ringing, their entrance was unobserved. The unfolded paper was lying upon the floor, and it was evident that the news which they had come to communicate had already reached Mrs. Lincoln. A report of the disaster had been circulated the evening before, but on account of its uncertainty it had been prudently withheld from her.

Mrs. Doxtater soon acquainted Bridget and Dinah of the loss. The former gave herself up to a paroxysm of uncontrollable grief. If the freed spirit looks from its heavenly home upon those it loved and cherished here, the spirit of poor Dick was compensated in the manifestation of Biddy's grief at his loss for her seeming indifference at his departure. Dinah, whose was that trusting piety which "enters the closet and shuts the door," sought, in the retirement of her chamber, the protection and blessing of Him who has promised to be the "widow's God" and a "Father to the fatherless."

Mrs. Doxtater watched by the bedside of Mrs. Lincoln. At times she rallied, but with returning consciousness came the recollection of the sad truth, and she would sink again into a dreamy, wandering state. How truly may we be thankful even for the weakness of our nature; for when affliction like this falls crush-

ingly upon us, that nature sinks, and we are lost in forgetfulness; and realizing it only at intervals, we are schooled to the endurance of our griefs.

The angel of sorrow had folded her sad wings, and was resting upon this once favored home! Here let us leave it, a moment, in the darkness of her reign, and read the account of the disaster from the captain of the Henrie, as it was contained in the paper where Mrs. Lincoln had first learned it.

"STATEMENT OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE HENRY.

"The wind was blowing hard toward the northwest, and we were struggling against a heavy sea, certain, however, that the gale would soon be over, when we discovered in the distance what appeared to be a wreck. We made toward her, and found her to be a sailing vessel. Her masts had been torn away, the men were busy at the pumps, and it was evident she was fast filling. The sea was constantly driving us from her; we lowered a boat, amid all the fury of the waves, determined, if possible, to rescue the crew; but our efforts were useless, and we only succeeded in securing a bottle which was thrown to us by a man upon the wreck. About half an hour after we discovered her, she sank. We could distinctly see the crew, as they gathered upon the highest points of the sinking vessel, and the despairing cry which they uttered when they were plunged into the water, reached our ears above the roaring of the ocean. A letter contained in the bottle which was thrown to us, was written, according to the date, the day previous, and read as follows: '*Aug.* 2.—I write this, that if we are lost, our fate may be made known to our friends. We have now been three days tossed about by the waves; our masts gone, and our vessel perfectly unmanageable. It is only by

constant pumping that we can keep from sinking; our men are nearly exhausted, and we shall be able to hold out but a few hours longer. May God have mercy upon our families!—GEORGE LINCOLN, *Ship Argos.*' To this was added a list of the names of the crew, in order that there should be no uncertainty as to the fate of any. We remained half an hour about the place where she sank, to see if any thing further could be learned concerning her, and in the time fired three guns, but finding all useless, we steered our course homeward."

The hopefulness of Mrs. Lincoln's nature had never suffered her to look upon so dark a woe as this. Her sadness had only been felt on account of the present separation from her husband; and when the stroke came, and that hopefulness was forever crushed, she sank beneath the blow! For several days she seemed to be in a kind of delirium, but it was only the wildness of real sorrow. She clung to her little ones with an agonizing grasp; for they were all that was left to her. Her affections were bounded by the world, but it was now powerless to comfort her.

Nellie could understand but little of the occasion of this change in her home, and she was wholly unable to realize her loss. Dinah was the only person who lent a patient ear to her many inquiries, and by her, many truths were fixed upon the child's heart, which, in after years, she learned fully to appreciate. She had already learned to love her Saviour, and her love was strengthened more and more from Dinah's assurance, that He would be her "Father, and watch over and take care of her now." How unsuspecting is childhood's confidence! Surely, to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must become as little children.

One afternoon, as Nellie was standing by her moth-

er's side, and looking wonderingly into her face, listening to her sobs and exclamations of sorrow, she heard her utter this expression—"What will become of us?"—and thinking the question addressed to her, she answered, "Why, mamma, God will take care of us." Then observing her mother's look of surprise, she continued, as if fearing her assertion was doubted, "Mamma, Di tells me so, and Di knows all about it."

For a moment, there sprung up in the widow's heart a resolution to trust Him; but human pride seemed unyielding, and she shrank from seeking, in adversity, a Friend she had rejected in prosperity. "The human heart is deceitful above all things," for God "is more ready to give good gifts" than we are to ask for them.

A calmness at length succeeded to the wildness of Mrs. Lincoln's grief, and Dinah often dropped into her ear words which sank deep into her heart; and she was pleased to read to this faithful disciple the note which she had received from her husband, the contents of which she had never, until then, communicated. The whole fountain of Dinah's gratitude was opened, and her words were more and more comforting, since she could point the heart of her mistress heavenward, not only as to the dwelling of the "widow's God," but the home of him for whom she mourned.

"God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the wise;" and the worldly wisdom and understanding of Mrs. Lincoln was confounded by the Christian fortitude and resignation of this unlettered African.

CHAPTER VII.

The few succeeding weeks passed slowly and sadly away. The captain of the Henry visited Mrs. Lincoln, but in the published statement he had communicated all that he knew of the fate of the Argos and its crew; still she hoped, and waited for more—vain hope! A dark world of waters was sweeping above the spot where the vessel rested, and in their hollow roar were chanting an unceasing dirge for the dead which they were keeping, in that vast "grave-yard without a monument," until the voice of the Omnipotent shall call forth "all that are in their graves."

Mrs. Lincoln had not made any intimate friends since her coming to New York, and of all those chance acquaintances there were none, except Mrs. Doxtater, who felt at liberty to visit her in her affliction, lest their visits might be considered intrusive. Deeply did she feel the need of a kindly heart, into which she might pour, freely, a portion of her sorrow. Mrs. Doxtater came often to sit with her, and cheer, if possible, her crushed spirit; but she had more love for the gay haunts of fashion than for the dwellings of mourning, and her affected sympathy was ineffectual to comfort.

Several weeks passed away in this manner, after which Mr. Doxtater, taking advantage of his profession, suggested to Mrs. Lincoln the necessity of having the estate of her husband legally arranged that she might know her real circumstances, and enter upon a

course of living becoming her situation. The style to which she had been accustomed would soon exhaust a large fortune, if that fortune were not invested so as to secure a considerable income, and from the knowledge which he had of Mr. Lincoln's affairs, he was confident that in the destruction of the vessel and cargo, the bulk of his property had been lost. This suggestion should be attributed to a true spirit of kindness in Mr. Doxtater, for he saw well that every day's delay was but lessening the widow's portion. Mrs. Lincoln saw, and felt this, and readily submitted the arrangement of the business to him.

And now, for the first time, the thought that she might soon be poor, and dependent upon the charity of a cold world, flashed across her mind.

Her little ones, the elder of whom could number but four winters, and the younger but one, might even now be compelled to face the cold storms of adversity; and, cradled herself in the lap of luxury, how unfit was she to nurse the children of misfortune. Comforting burdens truly did they appear in this hour. But the thought passed before her like a horrid dream, and she clung, trustingly, to the home and comforts which she then possessed.

Among all Mr. Lincoln's books and papers Mr. Doxtater found nothing to encourage the hope that some provision might have been made by the former for his family, in case of an event like that which had really taken place.

In about two weeks Mr. Doxtater called to acquaint Mrs. Lincoln with the result of his investigations, and offer advice as to what he deemed the wisest course for her to pursue.

"There are no debts to be paid," said he, "neither is there any thing due to the estate, and the business is

in a remarkably correct condition. The household furniture is all that you can ever realize, and I advise you to sell it at auction, immediately, together with the lease for the dwelling, which you can do, I think, with profit, owing to the scarcity, at present, of desirable locations in the city, and upon the proceeds of the sale you will be obliged to depend for a livelihood. The furniture is new," he continued, looking around the room, "and very fashionable, and will bring quite a comfortable sum, which, if managed with prudence, will go far toward your support."

Mrs. Lincoln listened earnestly. There was that in Mr. Doxtater's manner and words which revealed to her the fact that she was doomed to poverty, and the thought which had flitted across her mind, she felt, was a foreshadowing of her real fate, and, in an agony of despair, she exclaimed, "What shall I do!"

"Have you no friends to whom you can go?" asked Mr. Doxtater.

"None," she said, sobbing violently. "I am homeless and friendless."

"O, no," said Mr. Doxtater, encouragingly; "we shall do the best in our power by you; and I hope that you may have sufficient to secure to you a comfortable living, though it must necessarily be very different from the one you have thus far enjoyed. These reverses will come, and we can not tell who may be the next to meet them. We must learn to bear them philosophically; that is the only way to get along in this world."

Her whole frame shuddered at the coldness of such sympathy. She could say no more; and Mr. Doxtater left her to consider his proposition.

Bridget and Dinah had heard this conversation; for they had forgotten, in their affliction, all common form-

alities, and were present, eager to catch every word which might concern them.

"The cold-blooded fellow!" said the former, as Mr. Doxtater closed the door behind him. "Sure no gintleman would say the like to one troubled like ye." And the pride of her nature rising with her pity, she continued, "It 's not on him we 'll be dependin'. While Biddy 's got the strong arm she now has, ye 'll not want, for it 's togither we 'll stay, that same I 'll promise ye"—and to the crushed heart of Mrs. Lincoln, there was comfort even in this promise.

Dinah again sought to point her mistress to that comfort which the world can not give, and which cometh down from the "Father of lights." "Oh, Missy," said she, "de Lor' Jesus can support in de hardest trials, and it 'pears berry strange to Dinah, Missy don't trust in Him."

"I would if I could," said the half-resolved woman, "but I can not; I have tried."

"Missy did not try de right way, 'tis berry certain; for de Lor' Jesus allers hears dem dat comes to Him in de right way. If I could read in de Good Book, like de preacher can, and find all de places, you could see de right way 'zactly; but I only knows what I hears on de Sundays, and I can't remember but berry little." And then, as if catching a new idea, she continued, eagerly, "but Missy can read for herself, and if she don't read just de places de preacher does, it is all good."

Persevere, faithful Dinah! The promises are sure. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." "The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much;" and thy prayers have arisen and entered the ear of

Him whose ear is ever open to His children when they cry unto Him.

This conversation was interrupted by the ringing of the door-bell. Bridget obeyed the summons, and admitted into the parlor a tall and remarkably fine-looking gentleman who inquired for Mrs. Lincoln.

"And who shall I tell her ye are?" she asked.

The stranger hesitated a moment, then taking a card, he wrote a few words upon it, and gave it to Bridget, saying, "That will do—take that to her."

There was an appearance of agitation in his manner which excited her curiosity, and she went hastily to deliver the message.

Mrs. Lincoln read the writing on the card, and the deep color came and went rapidly on her face. With it she was unacquainted, and the message was mysterious indeed.

"*Do not refuse to see one who loves you.*"

She sent Bridget to the parlor to ask once more the name of the stranger, but she only received the answer—

"A true friend."

At another time, and under different circumstances, she might have refused compliance with such a request; but the message was calculated to inspire confidence, and in such a time of need, human nature shrank from rejecting one who might prove to be a friend indeed, and she went tremblingly to the parlor. When she entered, the stranger stood gazing intently upon a portrait of herself which was hanging against the wall, and before her presence was observed, she had recognized her visitor, and sinking upon the sofa, she buried her face in her hands.

"Can you forgive me, Mary?" were the first words he spoke when he discovered her, and the tone and

voice in which they were uttered revealed the truth that a sincere spirit of penitence prompted them.

"May slighted woman turn
And, as a vine the oak hath shaken off,
Bend lightly to her leaning trust again?
O, no! . . . . . .
. . . . . estrange her once—it boots not how—
By wrong or silence—any thing that tells
A change has come upon your tenderness,
And there is not a feeling out of heaven
Her pride o'er mastereth not."

And thus unyielding was the pride of Mrs. Lincoln, and she hesitated not to answer—"No!"

She did not venture to uncover her face and meet the eye of her visitor, lest she might be overpowered by her emotions. He lingered but one moment, then, without a farewell, he hurried from the house. When she roused from the reverie into which she had fallen, she discovered, lying beside her, another card, on which was printed the name and place of business of him who had just left her. On the back was written, in pencil, these words. "Should you desire any further communication with me, address, as directed on the other side."

In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Doxtater called, and Mrs. Lincoln consented to the immediate disposal of her goods, as Mr. Doxtater had advised.

Mrs. Doxtater repeated, again and again, her regret that such an affliction had befallen her neighbor, and offered the consoling assurance that she believed people are often as happy in humble life, and even more so, than in the most exalted positions. Her best wishes, she declared, would follow her friend wherever she went, and she invited Mrs. Lincoln, with her family, to partake of her hospitality until she should

make definite arrangements in reference to her future course.

It was evident that the golden link of her friendship had been lost with the wreck, in the bosom of the ocean. But deeper interests were agitating the breast of the widow, and she was almost unconscious of Mrs. Doxtater's coldness. Recollections had that day been awakened which seemed to deaden her sensibilities to all things else.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Going, going, gone!" cried the auctioneer to the crowd who had gathered at the auction room, in accordance with a notice which had been posted in all the streets, that, on that day, the personal property of the late George Lincoln would be sold at public auction.

"Going, going—who bids higher?—going, going—the man who could take this article for six dollars must have an India-rubber conscience, and I am afraid it will snap at that—going, going—no more bids—*going*—g-o-i-n-g—gone!"

Thus, one by one, the different articles of furniture were struck off at less than half their value, and carried away to beautify the parlors, or add comforts and luxuries to the homes of those who were "rich and increased in goods, and had need of nothing," and who seemed to forget that they were taking advantage of misfortune, and robbing the widow and the fatherless.

But this is world-like. How often do we hear the wealthy boasting of their good fortune in purchasing some expensive article very much below its true value, and sometimes they will add that it was *charity* for the unfortunate which prompted the purchase! Surely there is one charity of the world, and another charity which is heaven-born.

During the progress of the sale, a gentleman, leading a little boy about seven years old, stepped in to see what was going on. They, apparently, were not resi-

dents of the city, but were walking through the street simply to gratify their curiosity. Just as they entered, the auctioneer displayed a portrait of the two children elegantly framed. The infant was represented as sitting upon the floor, while little Nellie was striving to attract its attention to a large red apple which she was holding before her. There was a remarkably life-like expression upon both countenances, and it was evident the picture was the work of an artist of no ordinary attainments. The auctioneer said, as he held it up before the company of buyers who were assembled around him:

"It is nothing but a widow's necessity that prompts the sale of this picture, and now, gentlemen, bid as you would bid for a fancy painting, for I promise you that you will never find any thing much superior to this."

But the sale was dull—no one seemed to desire the portraits of another person's children, and there were no bids. Still the auctioneer continued to urge.

"Buy it for the frame alone, then. Come, gentlemen, it must be sold. Can I have a bid? Will some gentleman bid!"

All this time the little lad, attracted by the picture, was urging the gentleman, in whose charge he seemed to be, to buy it for him.

"Please, uncle, get it for me," he said, and fearing his importunity might be unavailing, he added, "I had rather have it than the rocking-horse you promised me. Uncle, won't you buy it?"

"Are you sure," said the gentleman, "that you will not want the horse if I get you the picture?"

"Yes," said the boy, eagerly; and his admiration being increased by the hope of possessing it, he added, delightedly, "O, what a pretty little girl that is; and see how cunning that baby looks at the apple!"

"One dollar," shouted the uncle, just as the auctioneer was about giving up all effort to dispose of the article.

"Two," cried a voice in a distant part of the room.

"Two," echoed the auctioneer. "Going—going for two dollars."

"Three," again shouted the uncle.

"Three and a half," cried the distant bidder again.

"Going—going for three dollars and a half," continued the auctioneer.

"Five dollars," cried the uncle, becoming excited in the sale, and almost forgetting for what he was bidding.

"Going—going for five dollars," cried the salesman; "going—going"——his hammer dropped, and the picture was "*gone*" to its little admirer.

The by-standers were attracted by the manifestations of delight which the little fellow exhibited when he received it, and one jocosely remarked, "When you are older, Bub, you'll find it a difficult matter to get the lady you love at as cheap a rate as you have this one; five dollars won't begin."

A general laugh followed this remark; and the little fellow turned his head knowingly, and said, "We'll see."

His uncle ended the conversation by saying, "If he becomes as fine a man as he is a boy, perhaps some lady will be willing to bid more than five dollars for him;" and, bowing to his transient acquaintances, he left, with his nephew and the picture.

The time had passed rapidly away since they had entered the auction-room, and they hurried down the street, and jumped upon a train of cars which was about to leave. Twice the engine whistled, and the two were borne away toward their own home.

Next, an elegant sofa was put up, and the bidding

was quick and animated until the amount reached twenty-five dollars. "Going—going," cried the auctioneer; "and for twenty-five dollars, this sofa, which was never bought for any sum inside of a hundred—going—going—gone; whose is it?" As Mr. Doxtater stepped forward to claim the article, the auctioneer added, in a low voice, "O, I thought so—the man with the India-rubber conscience again."

"One dozen sofa chairs. Now, gentlemen, let me hear your bids."

"Fifty cents apiece."

"Fifty cents—fifty cents; going—going."

"Seventy-five cents."

"One dollar."

"One dollar—one dollar; going, gentlemen, these chairs at one dollar; each of them worth five dollars this moment; going—going; who bids higher?"

"One dollar and a half."

"One dollar and a half; going—going; do I hear any more? going—going."

"Two dollars."

"Two dollars—two dollars; going—going—going—gone;" and again Mr. Doxtater appeared to claim the chairs.

"O, how India-rubber will stretch!" soliloquized the auctioneer.

A second day's sale became necessary, which increased expenses; and interest growing dull, the sacrifices became greater and greater; and a few hundred dollars was all that remained as the portion of the widow and her little ones.

Mrs. Lincoln had been nearly a week with Mrs. Doxtater. Sarah Pease had been dismissed; Dinah had bestowed her final blessing, and offered her final consolation, and was now lost in the depths of one of the

city kitchens; and Bridget, who had been the partner of her mistress in prosperity, and her equal in affliction, alone remained to be a sharer in her adversity.

"Homeless and friendless!" Mrs. Lincoln had once uttered these words, but she now felt their import almost perfectly. There was one friend left her, she knew, in faithful Bridget; but she was too weak to protect and support her. Homeless and friendless! No deeper life-woe can fasten upon us than is expressed in those two words. There are some natures fitted to breathe only the atmosphere of luxury, and who shall tell how these shall endure the cold blasts of misfortune! Homeless and friendless! with a deep, dread meaning did they sink into the widow's heart, and she found her strength and hope fast going—going—almost gone.

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Lincoln chose for her home a small brown house, on a pleasant hill-road. It was quite beyond the city, for her blighted hope and pride shunned contact with scenes in which she had mingled in happier days. She shrunk from meeting the gaze of those whose smiles would doubtless be exchanged for looks of pitying scorn, and the tears she loved to shed would fall freer in the solitude of the country than in the disturbed dwellings of the town.

Her two little ones and Bridget were her only companions, and she desired no others. A calm had succeeded the fierce storm of her sorrows—despair no longer rested on her brow—a look of hopefulness sometimes shot across her countenance, but it was only when she "*looked upward*," and she had learned to do so confidently. She had consented to trust the "widow's God." Dinah's prayers were answered, she had not sought for her mistress worldly blessings, and Mrs. Lincoln's hopefulness was not for the comforts of this life, but of that which is to come. In this world, Dinah might never know of this, but when both shall have gained that "something beyond" for which their hearts were then sighing, they shall sit together, and unitedly chant the song of redeeming love. A dark shadow hung over her earthly prospects, but the star of a bright eternal destiny shone through the darkness.

Little Nellie sometimes hung upon her knee, and begged to know why she would live there.

"Mamma," she one day asked, "this is not our good home. When will mamma go back?"

"I can never go," she answered; and the words choked her utterance.

"Does mamma love this home best?" the child continued.

Again she choked, and wiped away the gathering tears.

"This is all the home we have," she replied.

"Why, mamma, where is our other home?"

"Your father is dead, my child, and there is no one to give us a better home."

"But, mamma, is not God our Father? Why don't He give us another home?"

"He will, my dear, but not until we go beyond the skies, where our own father is."

"Please, mamma, let us go home, then."

"O, Nellie! if we only could, but we must wait patiently till God takes us there." Though the grave is dark, and lone, and dreary, and the soul clings fondly to earth, yet was she weary of life, and would have joyed to sink into its darkness!

Mrs. Lincoln had purchased only a few necessary articles for house-keeping, and her home looked desolate, indeed. The care of the children then rested wholly upon her, for Bridget went every morning to perform day-labor at the houses in the suburbs of the city, and in this way earned a scanty support for the family. Her walk was often long and tedious, and when at night she returned, weary and worn, she could render but little assistance to Mrs. Lincoln, upon whose health these exertions made perceptible inroads.

One evening, as Bridget was returning from her daily work, she was accosted by a gentleman whose countenance she recognized, but when or where she had seen him she was unable to recollect.

"Do you still live," he asked, "with Mrs. Lincoln?"

"I do, sir," she answered, "and it's not in me heart to lave her at all."

"Will you hand her this note, and bring me an answer to-morrow morning? I will be at the omnibus watering-place at any hour you may please to name."

"With her lave I'll do it, sir; ye'll see me when I'm passing, at six, or near that, sir. But maybe ye'd jist step up and see her yerself. It's only in the brown house yonder she's stayin'."

"It is impossible," said the stranger; "the note will be sufficient," and bowing politely, he walked away.

Mrs. Lincoln opened the note, and read as follows:

"MARY—Can you now forgive? and would assistance from one who truly loves you be acceptable?

"C."

A wild conflict of interest, pride, and contempt rose in her thoughts. Her prayer had been "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and she was ready to pardon; but to receive assistance from one whom she could neither trust nor respect, even though she so much needed it, she could not consent. There were in her breast crushed flowers of affection which sometimes seemed to spring and start to new life, but reason and judgment trampled them again, and she wrote these words:

"I forgive, even as I hope to be forgiven for my trespasses by my abused Saviour; but, with thanks, I must decline all assistance, and all further intercourse with you. I look for assistance from Him who has never left or forsaken me; and of Him I entreat you to seek forgiveness. MARY E. LINCOLN."

Bridget found the stranger where he had promised to meet her, and waited until he had read the note, to see if he would wish to return another, for she was wholly ignorant of the contents of either. He looked thoughtfully a moment, then said,

"Tell her farewell forever."

Bridget never met him again, though she watched with no little interest whenever she passed that way.

When the cold, rainy autumn weather was full upon them, Mrs. Lincoln's health and strength yielded, but necessity stimulated her, and she seemed herself insensible to her rapidly increasing weakness. Bridget, too, was more at leisure, and lightened her labor materially.

"I niver thought ye 'd come to this," said she, one stormy afternoon, when Mrs. Lincoln was endeavoring to prepare some suitable clothing for winter; "sure there 's no dependin' on riches; it bates me dhreams how quick ye 're changed."

"Yes, Biddy," she replied, "we have both seen better days, and you were once dependent upon me, but now, if it were not for you I should sink down and die. Biddy," she continued, "you are very kind to me, and I never expect to repay you."

"It 's not pay at all I 'm desirin'. It 's the very same I 'm doin' for ye, ye long ago did for Biddy, barrin' the money, ma'am."

"Your kindness is worth more to me than money," said the other; "but you are poor yourself, and I feel, every day, that you ought to be engaged in some profitable employment."

"I 'll never lave ye, ma'am, be sure, while I 'm at all meself," answered Bridget, determinedly; and for a while both remained silently at their work. The big tears would sometimes fall upon Mrs. Lincoln's lap, but she brushed them quickly away, and worked as fast as

her unaccustomed hands would permit. All at once, Bridget's face brightened with animation, and she said,

"May be, ma'am, the world will be makin' another shift with ye; it 's many that 's been worse off than ye, that 's now the best off of all the people in New York."

But earthly hope in Mrs. Lincoln's heart was dead; and she assured Bridget that rest from trouble would never dawn upon her until it dawned beyond the night of the grave. As she added, "Were it not for the children, I should long to go to that rest immediately," she cast pitying looks upon the little ones who were playing upon the bare floor; for childhood tastes not the bitterest dregs of such misfortune, and it can smile at momentary pleasure, all unconscious of its real misery.

The winter was long and severe; but by prudent management, and the help of Biddy's earnings, Mrs. Lincoln had saved enough of her small fortune to provide the most necessary comforts, and though her purse was rapidly being emptied, Biddy encouraged her with the assurance, that when the spring should come there would be plenty of work, and then she could get much higher wages than she had done in the fall; besides, the widow, by knitting during the long evenings, was able to earn a little herself. A part of the time she spent in teaching Nellie. Perhaps some might have found happiness here, but too deep a sorrow had settled upon her, and earth could no more avail to please. Had she then been placed under the full glare of the sun of prosperity, her nature, already crushed, would have withered the more rapidly; for as a plant, though colorless, will live in a dark cellar, if transplanted to the healthier garden, the heat of the sun will burn away every particle of its life.

The road, by the side of which Mrs. Lincoln's house

stood, was very delightful, and in summer was much frequented by riding parties from the city; and she sat often by the window, and watched the faces of the happy companies as they drove gayly by. Often, on their return, would they stop and ask a drink of water, and sometimes she saw those, who in other days had sought her society, but who would have been unable to recognize, in the thin, pale widow, the once admired Mrs. Lincoln. The children would amuse themselves for hours at a time, watching the splendid carriages and the rich clothing of their occupants, or the gayer appearance of those on horseback. Even Nellie had now but a faint recollection of the beautiful clothes which she once wore; and all her thoughts of her former home were like clouded remembrances of an almost forgotten dream.

One afternoon, about the middle of the first summer which they had spent in their new home, when Nellie sat in the doorway watching the passers-by, she called loudly to her mamma to see the carriage and pretty horses, with bright buckles, which were coming down the hill. Mrs. Lincoln glanced through the window, and recognized the carriage as the one belonging to Mr. Doxtater. John, his coachman, was sitting upon the box, and when directly before the house, he stopped the horses.

Mrs. Lincoln was quite certain that no desire to renew their acquaintance with her, prompted the call, and very prudently left Nellie to answer the demands of the visitors.

"Little girl," said Mr. Doxtater, thrusting his head out of the carriage, "won't you get my little girl a drink of water?"

"Yes, sir," said Nellie; and running quickly into the house, she brought the earthen mug from which she

herself drank at table, filled with cool, sparkling water, and she felt happy in the thought that so pretty a child was about to drink out of her cup. But Mrs. Doxtater, regardless of her daughter's eagerness for the water, drank before giving it to her. Lulu's impatience to drink being increased by this little delay, she flew into a violent passion, and refused to touch it. While her mother was endeavoring to pacify her, and coaxing her with the promise of good things when they should get home, John, who had been all the time eyeing Nellie closely, stepped down from his seat and said to Mr. Doxtater,

"If I ever saw her, that 's the little girl who lived by you a year ago."

"O, no," said the other, quite unwilling to acknowledge the truth, "that family left the city immediately after the sale of their property; we should have heard of them if they were as near us as this."

But John was not thus easily convinced that he was mistaken; and turning to Nellie, he asked, "What is your name, little girl?"

"Nellie Lincoln."

"Do you live here?" continued John.

"Yes, sir," she answered; "and I've got a little sister, and my mamma is in the house."

"I thought so," said John, turning to Mr. Doxtater; but just here, Lulu, her temper having reached its height, struck the mug from her lips, where her mother had placed it, and dashed it to the floor of the carriage.

Nellie's heart was near bursting when she saw the fate of her favorite cup, but Mr. Doxtater quieted her, by saying,

"Never mind; I 'll give you money to buy a prettier one, if you will get me a little more water."

Nellie went as she was desired; and while she was

gone, some words passed between John and Mr. Doxtater; after which, the former took his seat, evidently feeling rather vexed, for he sat cracking his whip and muttering something to himself all the time Mrs. Doxtater was brushing away the water which had been spilled upon their clothes. Lulu drank peaceably the contents of the second cup which Nellie brought; and when Mr. Doxtater returned it, there was a bright half-dollar shining in the bottom, and Nellie felt that her loss was more than repaid when she discovered it.

The next day when Bridget went to town she carried the piece of money, and the two little ones were watching, long before the hour for her return, and when at last she did come, she brought each of them a prettily colored mug, and Nellie a little reading-book with bright painted pictures, and all bought with the half-dollar. Nellie was delighted, and she loved the gentleman whose little girl had broken her cup. She often noticed his carriage roll by, and as often felt disappointed that he did not stop and let her bring him water in her new cup, and show him her pretty book.

But he never paid any more attention to her, though she sometimes ran half across the road that he might see her.

There was, too, a great omnibus with four horses which passed every hour, and a man with very black eyes sometimes sat by one of the windows, and whenever he did he threw a piece of money to the little girls; and they loved him, too, and remembered him, though weeks passed between his visits.

But the every-day history of real life is dull, and there is a monotony in the story of its humbler walks which soon becomes tedious to the listener.

CHAPTER X.

Nearly three winters and three summers passed away while the widow lived in the little brown house on the hill-road. Sickness and want had been stealing steadily upon her, and she had drunk deeply of the cup of misery. Bridget had found an echoing heart in the breast of a worthy compatriot, but she turned a deaf ear to its pleadings, and remained faithful to Mrs. Lincoln.

But a change was about to come. The pale face, the hollow cough, and the trembling step of the poor widow, plainly indicated this. Nor was she herself unaware of the fact. Her sunken eyes were often turned upward; and as she seemed to catch new manifestations of that spirit which is the happiness of the home whither she was fast hastening, smiles lighted her death-like features, and she longed for the hour of her departure. There was still one tie to bind her to earth. She knew, and felt a mother's love! She had watched the course of the motherless child; she had seen the cold eye of the world attracted only by its faults, and she knew how the ear is chilled, and the heart grows dead without the softening influence of affection's voice. She knew, full well, how the young plastic mind will yield to every power which may be brought to bear upon it; and she had seen how, even with a mother's untiring care, the sweet, pure child has grown perverse.

"Strange that flowers of earth
Are visited by every air that stirs,
And drink in sweetness only, while the child
That shuts within its breast a bloom for heaven,
May take a blemish from the breath of love,
And bear the blight forever."

Mothers, I can not know your love. I can not approach the threshold of the deep home of your affections, but I have seen their workings, and I do know something of their power. I have a mother, and the warm breathings of her love still gladden all around me.

I have seen her, when my angry passions rose, drop bitter tears over my waywardness, and the pressure of her loving lips has often checked my rising ire. Can angry feelings, bitter thoughts, or even one harsh word withstand the power of a mother's kiss? And who can not tell how it soothes the pain of the aching head, and quiets the sting of the throbbing tooth, to rest that head and warm the cheek on a mother's breast! O, while life lasts, may a mother's love be mine, and when my eyes grow dim in death, may a mother's fingers close their powerless lids; may the sweet music of the skies burst on my heaven-tuned ear but as the lengthened note of my mother's song!

One evening, after a day of greater suffering than usual, Mrs. Lincoln called her little ones to her side and began reading these words, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am." She could read no more; a quick pain in her temples nearly blinded her eyes; closing her Bible and kneeling down, she offered a few sentences of that same precious prayer.

"'I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the

evil. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.'"

These two petitions included every thing that she could desire for them, and she arose. She led the little ones to their bed, and lingered by them until they had been a long time unconscious of her presence. The warm kisses which she then pressed upon their cheeks, she feared, yet was unwilling to believe, were the last she should ever give them.

Before those sweet sleepers awoke from their quiet slumbers, that mother had been sent from her heavenly home, a ministering angel, to watch at their bedside!

Bridget alone stood by her as she sank, suddenly, into the sleep of death; and when the bright sun arose she was basking in the rays of that brighter sun, even the Sun of Righteousness which lights the world to which she had gone!

That day the black-eyed stranger again rode by, and instead of the silver coin which he was accustomed to throw to Nellie, a bright gold one was sent to Bridget.

There were very few who followed the remains of the poor widow, which were, the second day after, laid solemnly in the "place to bury strangers in," but the spot was not neglected; a neat white marble slab soon marked the grave. How it came there was a mystery. Had Nellie seen it before she went away, she might have said that it grew with the little flowers which sprung up at its foot; but older heads knew better.

"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

"But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"For now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

"Precious, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints."

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever."

Is the tale, gentle reader, too dark and sad? We may never paint heart-woes, and life's waves sometimes beat with so great violence that the earth-tired soul rejoices to plunge into the River of Death, knowing that it shall be borne to a happier shore.

CHAPTER XI.

THERE was now no more obligation resting upon Bridget. She had proved herself the friend, faithful till death. It was not to be expected that she should undertake the care of the children, who were now left orphans. The city authorities had provided a place for such little unfortunates, and true charity demanded that she should attend to her own wants, and endeavor to make her situation more comfortable. Yet it was hard to give up those whom she had loved with almost a mother's love, to the cold charity of a heartless world; and she would gladly have toiled, as she had done in years past, could that mother have lived to guide their young minds, and whisper comfort when they wept with childish sorrow.

The day after the burial of Mrs. Lincoln, Bridget took the little girls to the office of the overseer of the city poor. At the time of her entering, that person was busily engaged, and requested her to sit down until he had a little more leisure.

A new life had opened to the children, and even now they seemed conscious of this. They clung to Bridget's clothes, and, with tears, begged her not to stay there. Her fortitude, at times, almost yielded to their entreaties, and she would feel half determined not to give them up.

Meanwhile, a plainly-dressed man entered the office, and said that he wished to transact a little business with the overseer. He, too, was requested to wait. It

was evident that he was a hard-working man, and one who estimated fully the value of every one of the sixty minutes in each hour, for he could not be idle, and taking up a paper, he tried to read, but his impatience so disturbed his thinking powers that he soon grew weary of it. He sauntered about the room, looking at the advertisements which were hanging against the wall, until he unconsciously came close to where Bridget and the children were sitting. He looked carelessly at them a moment, then slipping his hand into his pocket, he drew out two fine yellow apples, and gave one to each of the little girls. He found a third in another pocket, which he offered to Bridget. She took it thankfully; for she was eager to do any thing beside sitting still; then, seemingly for want of something else to occupy him, he began talking to Nellie.

"What is your name, Sis?" he asked.

"Nellie Lincoln," she replied.

"I suppose you mean Ellen, don't you?" he again inquired.

Nellie looked wonderingly at Bridget, who said, "It 's the very same, sure; but we 've fallen to callin' her Nellie intirely."

"Where do you live?" the man continued, interrogating Nellie.

"Sure she does n't live anywhere, and it 's for a place I brought her here this mornin'," again answered Bridget. "The mother 's just dead; I staid by her till the last, but she 's gone now, and it 's the city, sure, must take the children;" and as she said this, she wiped the great tears from her eyes with her apron.

"She 's a right smart-looking little girl," soliloquized the farmer. "How old are you?"

"I am seven years old," said Nellie; "and my little sister is n't but three."

The man walked up and down the room, thoughtfully, a few moments, and then the overseer called his attention, saying that he was ready to attend to him. The two talked earnestly together awhile, and again the farmer sat down.

The overseer was an elderly man, rather blunt in his manner, but, it may be, kind-hearted. Coming toward Bridget, he pulled down his spectacles, and after taking a good look at her with his naked eyes, replaced them, and remarked,

"You 're a stout-looking woman; guess you 're able to work; you don't want any help, do you?"

"It 's not for meself I 'm asking it, sir, but for the children I 've brought."

"Whose are they?" he inquired.

"A poor widow's who was buried yestherday, sir. Sure she was once rich as any of ye; but she was left a widow, and it 's to this her children have come," said Bridget, feelingly.

"But how came *you* to bring them here?" again interrogated he.

"And is n't it I, sure, that was with the mother iver since the little one was born, and it 's my work that has kept them the last year, but I can't keep them any longer; it does n't signify for me."

A large man, who was sitting in the further corner of the room, and had been busily reading since they entered, looked from behind his paper at hearing this last remark of Bridget's, and said,

"What that woman says is true. I know how that matter is. I settled the estate of their father; they had better be taken to the Orphan Asylum; but, bless me, what will our taxes be if city paupers increase at this rate!"

Bridget's blood boiled in her veins to hear this from

Mr. Doxtater, but she had long ago learned to bear his unkindness silently.

"'T will be pretty hard to fix that matter as you spoke of, Mr. Burke," said the overseer, turning to the farmer; "the two stick pretty close together; but I really think it 's about the best thing we could do, after all."

"Is it the children ye 're speaking of? Sure ye 'd not put them apart! 't would kill them intirely," interrupted Bridget, a little concerned as to what might be the matter under consultation.

"We can't pay much attention to the whims of poor people when they come to us for support; we do as well as we can by them, and they ought not to complain," replied the overseer, rather pettishly; and turning to Mr. Doxtater, seemed to be asking his advice about the propriety of his intention.

His back was toward Bridget, and she could not hear what he was saying, but she heard Mr. Doxtater reply, "Yes, yes; altogether the best plan; don't lose the opportunity."

The farmer now stepped up to Nellie, and said, "How would you like to go and live with me?"

"I don't know," answered Nellie, drawing a little closer to Bridget.

The farmer continued, rather coaxingly, "If you go with me you can have plenty of those nice apples, and you can ride almost every day, and have nice bread and milk when you are hungry."

Nellie's eyes sparkled as she listened to this story. She had almost forgotten how such nice things tasted, and she answered, "I guess I would like to go very well; may my little sister have some, too?"

"That other gentleman will get things for her," said the farmer, pointing to the overseer.

"Well," said Nellie, contentedly, and was going directly to Mr. Burke, when Bridget spoke.

"Ah, Miss Nellie, ye 're forgettin' yerself intirely! Sure ye 'll niver see little sisther any more if you lave her now."

"O, I will come back right away, Biddy," answered Nellie.

"Not a bit of that ye 'll do; it 's little of the world ye know at this age," answered Bridget.

Nellie's suspicion that all might not be as *nice* as she had at first imagined, became a little aroused, and she was quite undecided what she would do. Bridget's protestations were vain. She had given the children up to the care of a heartless charity, and she could not now influence the disposal of them. Mr. Burke received a small sum from the city treasury to provide suitable clothing for Nellie, and placed her carefully in the great market wagon which stood before the door. Bridget lamented loudly, but it was only what she must expect. Nellie had been offered a good place, in the world's eyes, and it could not be rejected. Nellie hardly knew what it was best to do. She might have cried thus to part with her only friends, but the promise of those fine apples, and that nice bread and milk, lightened her untaught heart, and restrained her tears; besides, she was just going to enjoy the first of the promised rides.

Her little sister was carried to the Orphan Asylum; and Bridget went to the "far West" with Patrick, many miles away from that dreaded ocean which had been the cause of all her great troubles. She went to begin a new life, in a new country, inspired by new love, new hopes, and new desires. She lived and grew old in her new home, and the last days of Patrick and Bridget were their best days. The earth is now fresh

above the spot where their children kindly laid them, to rest from their earthly toils.

After Nellie had kissed her little sister and Bridget good-by, Mr. Burke sat down beside her in the wagon, and drove away from the office into one of the busiest streets of the city. She saw a great many things to delight her, and to occupy her thoughts, but, most of all, she was delighted with the two bundles which the farmer placed behind the seat on which they were sitting, and which, he told her, contained new dresses for her to wear, if she was a good girl. He put her old bonnet away with the bundles, and gave her a new straw one, with bright pink bows upon it. Nellie sat up very straight all the way, for she could see the new strings, which hung down over her waist when she did so; but she was careful not to handle them much, lest she should soil them, for Mr. Burke told her they would never look well again if she fingered them.

It was ten miles to the place where farmer Burke lived, and the ride to it, in a market-wagon, was a very tedious one, to a child, after the novelty of riding had passed away. The farmer could overcome the distance without growing weary, for every field of grain, every meadow, and every patch of woodland which belted the country were full of interest to him. It was policy in him to notice the improvements which the farmers made, and to watch the success or failure of each experiment they tried; but Nellie had no interest of this kind. "God made the country," she thought, and she never dreamed that He required the labor of man to make it bud, and blossom, and bring forth fruit and grain. She loved the bright yellow apple she had eaten, but she was ignorant of the labor and care of preparing and selecting the cuttings, and properly set-

ting the graft. Mr. Burke was sensible of this, and endeavored to entertain his little companion with stories of squirrels and bees, and after listening to him awhile she began to talk freely herself.

"Have you got any little sister for me where you live?" she inquired.

"No," he answered; "but I have a little boy, and you may make a brother of him if you choose."

Nellie remembered the little brothers she had seen in the fine carriages, from the city, which so often passed her home on the hill-road, and she asked,

"Does your little boy have bright buttons on his coat?"

"Yes," said Mr. Burke, rather sadly; "but he don't wear coats much, he is sick all the time."

"Will he die, and be buried up in the ground, and go up in the sky, as my mamma did?" again asked Nellie.

A tear stole down Mr. Burke's sun-burnt cheek as he told her "he hoped not."

"Is he a good little boy?" continued Nellie.

"Yes, he is a very good little boy, and he wants some one to play with him, and that is the reason I took you," answered the farmer.

Mr. Burke was a widower. A maiden sister had kept house for him since his wife's death. She was a good woman, but there was little or none of that ardent affection in her nature which Nellie had seen in her mother. Perhaps such a principle was dormant in her breast, but it certainly had never been awakened toward any person whom she had met during a life of forty years. Mr. Burke was sensible of this failing in his sister, and though she was carefully kind, he was conscious that his only son, Willie, who had long been a sufferer from a disease of the hip, was not as happy

as he might be with a different companion; and his errand to the city on that day was to get, if possible, from the Orphan Asylum, a child who should be company for him. He had entered the office where he first saw Nellie, to inquire of the overseer about the matter, and, being pleased with her, he had offered, if the city would clothe her, to board and send her to school while she was in his family. He did not wish to adopt her, and obtained the privilege of returning her whenever he chose. The tenderest feelings of his nature had been quickened by the sympathy which he felt for Nellie, and Nellie's bright eyes and intelligent face had won for her a kind protector.

It was nearly dark when Mr. Burke turned his horses into a broad lane which led up to a neat, but small farm-house. As he approached it a little pale face appeared before the window. It was Willie's. He had been bolstered in a rocking-chair to watch his father's coming. A smile lighted his countenance when he saw him, and his father sang out, gayly,

"Halloo, sonny, father has brought you a nice little sister."

Nellie felt very awkwardly when she first went into the house, for every thing looked strangely to her, and she was not as happy as she had been in the wagon, alone with Mr. Burke, for a tall, sedate-looking woman took her new dresses and her straw bonnet away into another room, and she was not at all sure that she should ever see them again. But the lady gave her a bowl of bread and milk which tasted so nicely that she entirely forgot to cry.

After she had eaten she grew very sleepy, and Miss Burke took her up stairs and put her into a clean bed, and she knew nothing more until the morning.

That evening Mr. Doxtater went home and told his

wife that Mrs. Lincoln was dead, and that he had seen Bridget and the children, and that he had influenced the Poor-master to let Nellie live with a farmer who wanted a little girl, and that the little one was well taken care of, for she was in the Asylum. He added, very complacently, he was glad that he had had this opportunity of doing something for them—he felt willing to make some effort for their comfort; and then stretched himself upon a velvet-cushioned sofa, two-thirds of which, *if paid for*, would have gone far toward assisting the widow who had lately died from over-exertion and want.

CHAPTER XII.

Little Nellie was awakened very early in the morning by the stirring of those below. When she opened her eyes she was bewildered, and could not, at first, recollect how she came there, and she trembled with fear, and buried her face deep in the bedclothes and wept. But her fatigue, at length, overcame this, and she again sank to sleep.

It was long after breakfast, and not until Willie had grown very impatient to see his new sister, that Miss Burke consented to open her door, for she had not heard a sound from her room, and rightly conjectured that she was still sleeping. When she did so, Nellie was still lying with her head half buried in the pillow; one tightly-closed eye was in sight, but the deep fringe of the little lids was wet with tear drops, and all down her cheeks streaks of dirt from soiled hands showed unmistakable signs of a sad, sad crying spell. Her little breast was still heaving, unconsciously, with sobs, and Miss Burke was well-nigh melted to tears at the sight.

When we see the weeds of mourning, or enter the homes of want, we look for tears, and our hearts, though they may be filled with sorrow, yet feel not that warm, quick pity which seizes us when when we see a child, whose very element is happiness, thus giving its little self to sorrow. Life has its heavy cares and its deep reverses which cause even the strong man to bend, yes, sometimes to break beneath their weight,

and little troubles break little hearts, even as the gentle zephyr, so cheering to us, robs the spider of its silken home, and makes its life a life of labor and disappointment. Nellie had not wept over the great misfortunes which had overtaken her, for she did not fully appreciate them; but the horror of being in a strange room, alone, had opened the fountain of her sorrow.

Miss Burke's sympathy was soon, however, lost in vexation that she had been so thoughtless as to put that child into clean sheets without first washing her, after so dusty a ride as she had had the day before. While she was looking steadily at the child, and reproaching herself for this neglect, Nellie roused, and called loudly, "Mamma, Biddy," and seeing the face of a stranger in their stead, she began again to cry. Much of her fear, however, was removed when she again saw Mr. Burke; she had grown familiar with his face, which she had so carefully studied during the long ride of the previous day, and already she had learned to love him. The wholesome breakfast, too, with the frequently repeated assertion of the farmer that she was a "nice little girl," were powerful to banish her childish timidity.

After Mr. Burke had gone into the field, to his work, Nellie began to look about a little. There was a rag-carpet upon the floor with a great deal of red and yellow in it which pleased her much. Willie's lounge, too, was covered with a calico spread which had great pictures of birds and roses all over it; and there was a clock upon the mantle with long feathers stuck around it which had great blue eyes on the ends of them, and the white dimity curtains had, what looked to her like rows of tassels hung all down the edges. These things suited her fancy well, and she was greatly entertained with Willie's description of the parlor, of the peacock,

and of the chickens. She was very much surprised to hear that they slept on poles, and never fell off, and how the peacock would spread its feathers until it looked like a great ball.

Pretty soon Willie called his aunt and asked for his playthings. She opened a very little door beside the clock, and took from the shelf a plaster dog and two or three picture-books, and brought them to him, charging Helen (as she called Nellie) not to hurt the things if Willie let her take them. She put Willie's little chair beside the lounge, and told Nellie she might sit there, but she must be careful and not hit Willie, for she might hurt him if she did. She then left the two to entertain each other as they chose, occasionally, however, putting her head through the door to see what they were doing, and that the new comer kept out of mischief. Her last remark called Nellie's attention to Willie's affliction, and she asked,

"What do you stay sick all the time for, Willie?"

"Because I can't get well," he answered.

"You don't want to be sick, do you?" again she asked.

"No," he replied; "but I ain't sick all over."

"Where are you sick, then?" she continued; and Willie put his hand on his side and told her it was down there, so that he couldn't walk any.

"Can't you never go out doors?" asked Nellie, pitifully.

"Sometimes papa takes me out, and sometimes, in warm days, aunt puts my lounge out under the big tree in the front yard," said he; "but I can't go out myself."

"Too bad," ejaculated Nellie.

"But when I am older, papa says he guesses I can go alone with a pair of crutches. I am so little now I

could n't keep on them good; but if I can't walk like the other boys, I have more rides and more picture-books than they do, so I guess I have the most fun," he continued.

Nellie then opened one of the picture-books, and began reading under one of the prints, "A bear has four feet."

Willie was delighted when he heard her read; he never knew what it said under the pictures, and he called his aunt to tell her that that little girl could read, and that he liked her very well for a sister.

Miss Burke was much surprised to find Nellie so forward, and asked her who taught her.

"My mamma, when she was n't dead," said Nellie; and then she told Miss Burke that her mamma was dead, and was buried up in the ground, so that she should never see her any more; but that she had a little sister who staid with Biddy, and when she had played long enough with Willie she was going to see her again. The lady really pitied her, and half repented that she had so strongly opposed her brother in bringing a child there; besides, she was partly reconciled from the fact that he had brought a girl instead of a boy, for she thought girls were more easily managed than boys.

When Mr. Burke came home to dinner, Nellie sat upon his knee, and read to him; she showed him, too, a ring which was tied upon her finger, and said that her mamma put it there, and tied it with that strong string, and told her not to take it off if she could avoid it, until her finger grew large enough to fill it.

The farmer soon became deeply interested in his little protégée; he had been much in the company of his gentle son, and had learned to be interested in such things as are interesting to children. He could forget

the heavy cares of life, and answer, heartily, the smile which beamed in Nellie's face, as she mastered a difficult word, or succeeded in reading a whole line without hesitation; could listen to her cheerful prattle without weariness, and enjoy the little tales she told.

The afternoon was spent by the children much in the same manner that the morning had been, in making discoveries, and learning more of each other; but they were not there alone, for Miss Burke sat with them, and cut Nellie's pink dress, and a pair of white pantalets. Nellie sometimes approached her, and leaned against her chair; but there was something repulsive in her manner; and the child, instead of loving, feared her.

After tea, Willie was again bolstered in the rocking-chair, and placed before the window, where Nellie had first seen him; and Mr. Burke took her with him, across the lane, into the yard where the chickens were kept, and there she saw what Willie had described; and the peacock did spread its feathers, just as he had told her.

Nellie thought that she had come into a place of wonders; and when night came again, she was very tired of looking at all these strange things. With her weariness came the remembrance of those she had not seen since the morning before, and from whom she had never been so long separated at any previous time, and she began to inquire for them. When she found she could not see them, she wept bitterly, and was not quieted until she forgot her troubles in sleep.

That day had been one of the brightest of little Willie's life, for he had just the company he liked. When the neighbors' children came to see him, they were not contented to sit by him, but were off in the yard, out of his sight, the greater part of the time; and if they

did stay in the house, they were apt to make a noise, and sometimes they hurt him in their rough play. Suffering had subdued his naturally lively spirits; and although he was always cheerful, he was very mild and gentle.

Every body loved Willie, not with a love which springs from pity alone, but for his sweet and gentle disposition, which made him love every body. He was never forgotten when the first apples were ripe, or the strawberries turned red; and when any of the children went to the city and bought candies, they always saved a piece for little Willie Burke. So it was well for him that Nellie had come to live there, and very well for Nellie, too.

Sunday at length came, and Miss Burke put the pink dress and white pantalets on Nellie; and then, for the first time since she came, Willie wore his coat with bright buttons, for it was a very pleasant day, and on such days he sometimes went to church. His aunt tied several pillows in the great rocking-chair, and made it very soft around the arms, and he rode in it to church. Mr. Burke placed the chair with Willie in it close by the pew door, so that he was very comfortable.

So delighted was Nellie with her new clothes, and Willie's coat, that she forgot all about listening to the sermon. There were children there with much finer dresses, but she only remembered her own. After service a great many people came and spoke to Willie; some of the ladies kissed him, and asked him who that little girl was, and he said it was his "sister Helen." There was one very pretty young lady, with long curls, who kissed Nellie, too; for she said she loved her for Willie's sake. She was his Sunday-school teacher.

After the most of the people were away, Mr. Burke lifted Willie out of the chair, and Miss Burke shook up

the pillows to make his seat a little easier, and then the young lady brought five other little girls and boys into the pew, and talked with them about half an hour. She asked Nellie several questions, which the latter knew very well how to answer. She could read better than any of the children in the class, and her teacher gave her a book to take home with her. Then the school sang a hymn; and the young lady kissed Willie and Nellie again, before Mr. Burke put them into the wagon to go home.

Nellie liked Sunday better than all the other days, and wished it would come very often; for, besides going to church and wearing her new clothes, Mr. Burke staid in the house all the afternoon. She sat on his knee, and seemed to enjoy it so much that Willie thought he would try it; but it hurt him, and he had to make up his mind to be contented with seeing her sit there. Nellie asked Mr. Burke a great many questions about the heaven where her mamma and Willie's mamma had gone, but he did not tell her all she wanted to know, and she wondered why, and asked him if he could not tell her about heaven. He told her he "guessed not very well;" and when he said so, his eyes looked to her as if there was water in them, but she did not see any tears on his cheeks.

There were sad thoughts in Mr. Burke's mind; for Willie's mamma, whom he dearly loved, had gone up to heaven, and he was afraid Willie would soon go, too, and then he should be left without any companion or any little boy!

CHAPTER XIII.

The fall and winter passed away in much the same manner that the first week of Nellie's stay at the farm-house had done. The snow was deep, and Willie seldom was taken out of doors, and Mr. Burke did not often attend church when his son could not go, so that she was almost constantly at home. The children had grown firmly into each other's affections, and were well fitted for each other's society, for Willie, who had always been acquainted with suffering, had been much softened by its influence, and Nellie, whose fortune, almost ever since her remembrance, had been linked with misery, had learned to feel more at home with the suffering than with the gay. He seemed happy when enjoying her sympathy, and she was most happy in imparting it.

When the spring returned, and the roads became settled, Nellie was sent to school. She had a long way to walk, so she did not come home to dinner, but carried a luncheon in a little basket, and ate at the school-house. The seven hours she was away seemed very long ones to Willie, though he was half repaid for his loneliness when she returned, she learned so many things during the day to tell him. Although she was not taken as the child of Mr. Burke, Willie claimed her as a sister, and she was called by no other name than that of Helen Burke. There was a harshness to her in the name of Helen, but Miss Burke had called her so from the first, while, with the simple

sound of the gentler title, Nellie, there was mingled the idea of affection and love. This may have produced, in a measure, the coldness which ever existed between the two; for first impressions of persons, from whatever sources gathered, from look or tone, influence greatly our after intercourse.

Miss Lane, the lady with long curls, whom Nellie first met in the Sunday-school, was also the teacher of the day-school, and the same gentleness which characterized her in the one, was not forgotten in the other. A pure, unaffected piety controlled her actions, and entirely subdued the risings of her temper. How are the first dawnings of genius in the little child at once put out, and its youthful intellect, instead of being suffered to expand, often crushed, and almost deadened by unfit schoolmasters, unworthy the name of teachers, for they plant no principles in the scholar's mind but the principles of hate and dread of study! How many of the so-styled schools would be far more properly called infant inquisitions! The paths of knowledge may be strewn with flowers which children will love to gather, and their little feet will run unconsciously along the ways of science, eager to grasp the buds of truth. Thus every fine and lovely feeling will be refined and strengthened, while the harsh, unpleasant ones, for want of exercise, will disappear. And such was the effect of the influence exerted upon the pupils at Miss Lane's school. It was a nursery of all that is pure in our nature. Although she never forgot the dignity of the teacher, she was ever approachable, and her kind words and sweet smiles inspired her scholars with a desire to do as she would have them.

Miss Lane at first loved Nellie for Willie's sake, but she soon loved her for her own. She was often her companion in the long walks from school, and the les-

sons which Dinah had first taught her were repeated by Miss Lane, and she was then able to grasp much more of their meaning than she could do in her younger days. And all that Nellie learned was repeated to Willie. The long Saturdays were his school-days, and well did he improve and appreciate all he heard from his youthful instructress.

One pleasant Saturday morning, when Miss Burke had drawn Willie's lounge into the front yard, and Nellie was sitting by him, he gazed long and earnestly into the sky. Two great tears trickled down his hollow cheeks, but a flush came suddenly over his countenance, and they seemed to dry away with the warmth of a deep feeling within, which had sent the color to his face. Nellie saw it, and asked,

"What are you thinking of, Willie?"

"I was thinking of the time when I shall be in heaven; and how happy I shall be when I am not lame any more," he said.

"But what made you cry? Don't you want to go to heaven?"

"O, yes, I would like to be there now, but I know I shall have to die first, and I don't want to die."

"But we can't go to heaven if we don't die; and I had rather die than stay here always, and be always sick."

"I don't like to be buried in the ground. I don't care for any of the rest; I guess I suffer as much as to die, sometimes."

Nellie was sad; she did not know what to say to comfort him, but she promised to ask Miss Lane the next time she saw her. Just as she had come to this conclusion that lady appeared at the gate. She ran to her, and told her how badly she wanted to see her for Willie,—so badly she could hardly wait till Monday.

"What did you want to see me for?" said Miss Lane.

"O, for Willie. He feels bad about dying, and I did n't know what to say to him," said Nellie; "he is out here under the tree, and I will run into the house and bring you a chair to sit by him."

Miss Lane kissed Willie, and smiled, but she knew what thoughts were in his mind, and she had no desire to banish his sadness by any lightness of manner, but only to cheer him with true comfort, and she inquired,

"What were you and your sister busying yourselves about this morning?"

"We were only talking," answered Willie, who hardly knew what to say.

"And what were you talking about?"

There was no feeling but one of perfect confidence in Willie's breast toward Miss Lane, and he said,

"About my dying. I am afraid to die."

"Why, Willie, what makes you afraid?"

"I don't know," said he; "but something does."

"Are you afraid you shall suffer very much when you die, is that it?"

"No, I suffer all the time, and I sha'n't any more after that; but I don't know what it is."

"You think you sha'n't suffer any more after you die; who will make you well then, and keep you happy?"

"God."

"And if you live till to-morrow who will take care of you then?"

"God."

"Are you sure of this, Willie?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, are you afraid to live till to-morrow because you must sleep before to-morrow comes?"

"No, ma'am."

"Why, who will take care of you when you sleep? it will be all dark, and all around will be sleeping, too."

"God always takes care of me when I sleep."

"Well, if you are a good boy, when you die you will only sleep in death to wake on the morrow in heaven; do you think you need be any more afraid of that sleep than of the other? The same God will take care of you then."

Willie saw the matter in its true light, and the love and confidence which he already bestowed upon his Heavenly Father cast out his fear. She then told the children of the death of her mother; how peacefully and happily she sank to her last sleep; and they saw how it might be very sweet to die.

Willie was old enough to know that he must waste away under his disease, before very long; and this was why he thought so often of dying—but now his fears were gone. He had lived, as it were, free from contact with the sins of the world. and the truth found an easy access to his heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

The clouds had begun to darken the sky, the thunder growled angrily, and its threatening tones spread terror among the little band of children who were just leaving the school-house. The rain had not yet begun to fall, and the teacher hoped they might reach their homes before the storm came. Nellie had the longest distance to go, and her little feet had not accomplished more than half their task, when the darkness was broken by a fitful light, and the great rain drops began to fall heavily.

"Come in, child, come in," said a voice just behind her. "Come in; *you* should be coy of rain, for your light went out on the water," and she was caught up in the arms of old Barbara Dumo, a crazy woman, who hurried with her into her little hovel. "Sit down till the rain is over," continued the woman, before Nellie could remonstrate. "It was the water put the light out," and a smile shot over her vacant countenance as she added, "it will burn again for *me* in the graveyard."

Nellie had seen old Barbara often before, and though she knew her to be always kind and gentle, she trembled with fear, for her words were very strange to her, and the wildness of the storm, the heavy rolling of the thunder, with the sharp flashes of the lightning, appeared more dreadful than ever to her while she was in such a place.

Old Barbara had lived several years in this little

hovel. She was perfectly harmless, and pity prompted the neighbors to supply her wants. It was sometimes suggested that she should be taken to the Insane Retreat, but she so strongly opposed going, and pleaded so earnestly to be suffered to remain where she was, that none appeared willing to disturb her. Many were the ears of corn which were left upon the stalks in the harvest time for her to gather, and the bits of bread and meat from many a table were carefully preserved for her. Nellie had often set a pitcher of milk before the house on her way to school, but she ran away before Barbara opened the door to take it, and the cleanly washed pitcher was always standing where she had left it, when she returned.

Barbara replenished the fire, and drew the stool upon which Nellie was sitting, close to it, to dry her sprinkled clothes, and began preparing some tea. Every moment seemed an age to the terrified child, and at last she ventured to speak:

"I must go right home. Willie will want me now, and it is n't a great way."

"No, no, child," said Barbara; "have you forgotten how your light went out on the water, and the rain did it? stay still where you are, for there is death in the storm."

"I can't stay," continued Nellie, imploringly, every word the maniac uttered filling her with deeper fear.

Barbara gave a loud, senseless laugh, and taking Nellie's hand, said, "No, child; no," and eyeing her closely, she continued, "Helen Burke—Nellie Lincoln has forgotten the light; but, I tell you, it went out on the water, and you, too, must be coy of the rain. There was a little light left, but I can't tell where it shines." Then turning up the palm of Nellie's hand, she tried to read her destiny, in the lines upon it; for

she fancied she could look into the future, and she appeared troubled, and said, "It is too dark; my light can't shine in the rain, for the great light went out on the water."

She then poured the tea which she had prepared, into a cup, and bade Nellie drink it. Fright made her obedient. Barbara then took the cup and inverted it upon the floor, and struck it seven times, and then made another effort to read the destiny of her guest, in the lees which adhered to its sides.

"It only tells of the past," she said, at length; and bidding Nellie look where she pointed, she told her that that showed great misfortunes, that the greatest one of these was the going out of the light upon the water, and, she added, "it was for you I struck the cup; I can't see when it shall burn again; but mine shall burn in the grave-yard."

The rain had now ceased, but the road was very muddy; and old Barbara took Nellie in her arms, and carried her to Mr. Burke's door, then patting her cheek, gently said, "Good-night, child; be coy of the rain, and remember how your light went out on the water."

"O, I was so frightened!" said Nellie, after she had repeated to Miss Burke the story of the terrible hour spent with old Barbara. "She said such strange things, and looked so wildly at me."

"Foolish little coward!" replied the other, as she disappeared through the kitchen-door; "I may thank old Barbara that I sha'n't have you to take care of through a course of fever. She knows more now than half the people who ain't crazy."

CHAPTER XV.

Thus did Nellie spend her time during the six years which succeeded her coming to Mr. Burke's. The pure, health-giving air of the country, together with wholesome food and exercise, had painted her cheeks, and added strength and vigor to her constitution. She was then very different from the thin, delicate child whom Mr. Burke found in the overseer's office. Her disposition alone was unchanged. The same child-like sweetness still characterized her, and maturer judgment added greatly to her charms. She was the bright star in the sky of Willie's happiness, his guide, his comfort, his almost all. Her hand oftenest smoothed his pillow, and bathed his aching temples; her voice cheered his saddest hours. Willie knew dark hours of suffering; and the holy hope which had grown from childhood in Nellie's heart, was the anchor which supported him, and leaning confidently upon which, he was able to smile cheerfully, even upon the borders of that dark river near which he seemed to dwell.

He had grown since her coming, and the little lounge was quite too short for him then; but with his growth he had been wasting in strength; his face was even thinner, and his dark eyes looked larger and clearer. He was slowly sliding down the steep of life.

It was summer. The large tree in the garden afforded as delightful a shade, the birds sang as sweetly among its branches, and the breezes wafted as delicious perfumes and breathed as refreshingly as ever; but

he was too weak to enjoy them, death was creeping, almost imperceptibly, yet with fearful certainty, over him.

There are great lessons to be learned as we watch the closing scenes of life. The mind, quickened by its near approach to the spirit-world, speaks intelligibly in every expression of the countenance, and the words then spoken are the "words of truth and soberness." The trusting smile proclaims the supporting power of our religion, and the thoughtfully lustrous eye the dread realities of eternity, while the falling tear confirms the loveliness of life. By Willie's bedside, Nellie learned those lessons well.

A sad quietness had stolen over the home of Mr Burke. When Willie's mates came, they stood silently beside him, and listened earnestly to the counsels he gave them. Weeks rolled on, and the lamp of life continued to burn; and they who watched with him saw how equal is, sometimes, the conflict between the two great powers of Life and Death.

When the forest trees began to put on their rich autumnal dress, and the summer flowers were withering, and when the fruit was ripened, Willie was gathered, with the harvest, for heaven. It was early morning when he died. Nellie was sitting beside him about half an hour before his death, when he said, confidently,

"Sister, I am dying, now; call father and aunty, that I may see you all together when I go."

It was no unexpected summons which Nellie gave that father who had gone from the bed-side of his son only to give unrestrained utterance to his grief. The dying boy gave a kind word and a good-by to each, and then went where he shall "never suffer any more." "The silver cord was loosed, the golden bowl broken," and "the spirit had returned unto God who gave it."

In the same church where Nellie had first gone with Willie, his funeral was attended, and many more than they who that day smiled upon him, came to drop a tear over his coffin. He had faded in the spring-time of life, but he had planted in the hearts of all who knew him, affections which memory loves to nurture and treasure carefully, and all then felt that earth was "poorer by one lovely spirit less."

The greenest, loveliest spot on Mr. Burke's farm had been chosen for a family burial-ground. The place was very unlike a grave-yard. There was no dreariness attached to it. Willie's mother and grandfather were buried there, and the mound which was raised over him was only the third. Those three graves seemed like kind monitors to keep in mind the truth that there is yet a brighter world than this.

Nellie was then fourteen years of age, but young as she was, she had experienced more of this world's treachery and inconstancy than many whose locks are whitened with the frosts of time, and she was almost as mature in thought as in experience.

She was aware that another change had come in her history. She well knew that it was not a desire to promote her good which had secured for her the comfortable home which, during the period of six years, she had found at farmer Burke's; and that the love which had produced a willingness to attend to her every necessity, was not bestowed upon *her*, but upon him who was now no more, and whose pleasure alone demanded it. This knowledge, while she felt a true thankfulness toward her benefactors, had prevented her from lavishing upon them that free, filial love, which otherwise she could not have withheld. The sorrow which the young heart feels when it is left wholly desolate at the very budding of its deep affections, Nellie experi-

enced as she sat alone by the new-made grave in which Willie was sleeping.

Over Nellie's future course a darkness had gathered, so deep that she could not trace it with the slightest certainty, even for a single day, and her thoughts naturally reverted to the past. In the light of Willie's love she had almost forgotten its scenes, but now that was gone, many of them came back with remarkable distinctness to her memory. Her recollection of the days when fortune smiled upon her was very faint, but the scenes and faces which surrounded her while she lived on the hill-road were as plainly before her as if she had seen them but yesterday. She wondered why so great a change had come at all; then she remembered that her mother had often said when she made such inquiries, "Your father is dead, and there is no one to give us a better home."

Poor Nellie! she had looked upon herself as the protector of Willie, but she now felt how truly she had been dependent upon him. She remembered how want had crept into her family, and her mother had slowly sunk beneath it; and she remembered the last night when her mother watched beside her until she was fast asleep, and that when she awoke her mother was cold and lifeless. She remembered her sister, and Biddy's kind face, and the unhappy hour she passed with them in the overseer's office. She remembered, too, that she had not seen nor heard of either of them since, and she wondered where they were.

Almost the last words which Willie spoke to his father were, "Be kind to sister," and from this she felt much encouragement. It was sweet to her to feel that, even in his last moments, he felt an interest in her welfare. "Oh!" thought she, "could Willie have lived, how happy I should have been!"

For several days Nellie was permitted to pursue her chosen way entirely undisturbed, but the time thus given her only afforded opportunity for such thoughts to increase and ripen, and she was very sad. Sometimes she went to see Miss Lane, and to her she told her sorrows. That kind lady had known by a long experience, what such sorrow is, and her sympathy was pure and unaffected. How invaluable are such friends in such hours! Surely earth hath whereof to boast in the possession of them.

Nellie had not lived an idle life. A great proportion of the time when she was out of school, she had been employed with her needle. Miss Burke had not suffered her education in this branch to be at all deficient. She had done nearly all her own sewing, and Willie's besides; the care she had taken of him had very much lightened his aunt's labor. The many steps which she had been obliged to take daily before Nellie's coming, to answer his calls, she had since been released from, and her constant watching of him had become unnecessary. Nellie had in reality been no burden, but an almost indispensable requisite to the family.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Do you intend to keep Helen any longer, James?" said Miss Burke to her brother, one morning about a week after Willie's death.

"I have not thought any thing about the matter," he replied.

"I did not know what your calculations were. I thought you only brought her here to be with Willie."

"Very true; but she has become as one of the family, and I had not thought of sending her away."

"I suppose you know the board and clothes of such a girl amount to considerable, and the city, I don't believe, will help her much longer, if it does now."

"She is a good girl, and I really feel very much attached to her. It would come hard to send her off."

"But I suppose you will send her away some time; you don't expect to keep her always, do you?"

"Where in the world could she go?"

"She is old enough to earn her own living now. There are a great many girls much younger than she who do it."

"She ain't used to it at all, and I don't believe she would get along; she 's amazing tender-hearted, and would n't endure the treatment such girls get very well."

"Well, I want you to do just as you choose, but she's got to come to it some time or other, and I think it well to begin to bear the yoke a little in youth. I don't suppose you will make her your heir when you've got

brothers and *sisters* to whom you are indebted, and who need your assistance more than she."

Mr. Burke's temper was a little ruffled by this last suggestion, and he answered rather tauntingly:

"I may; for my brothers and sisters all had as fair a start as I did, and it 's their own look-out how they improved it."

Miss Burke felt this reply keenly, and she caught up her knitting work and made the needles fly as if she meant to make him feel his indebtedness to her, one of these cold days, in the warmth of a pair of new socks, and she said:

"Well, I have done the best I could by her, and shall expect to keep on if she stays here; I certainly sha'n't raise any objections to your keeping two or three more children if they only learn to wait on themselves." Then, as if a little repentant, she added, "Helen is very good about that; I 'll say so much for her."

"I really think she might be of service to you. I should be glad to see you have less to do this winter, and I think she had better stay, and in the spring, if it is best, we will find a good place for her."

Nellie was up stairs when this conversation took place, but the door was partly open, and she overheard it all. Her fears that she was no longer wanted were realized, and, for a moment, she was at a loss what to do; whether to run down and beg permission to remain, or let the affair take its own course. She wisely determined upon the latter, but when she came down to dinner it was with much agitation and fear; her appetite was gone, and she showed other signs of sorrow. After dinner she said to Miss Burke, in a very pleasant tone,

"Don't you want me to help you? I have n't any thing to do, now."

"Yes, Helen, if you had a mind to do any thing you might help me a great deal," answered Miss Burke.

"I have," said Helen; "I will do whatever you want me to."

"Well then, let me see how well you will clear up this table and wash the dishes. But be careful about breakin' things."

Miss Burke then sat down to her sewing, rising, however, occasionally to give some new charge to Helen, who was busily engaged about the work she had undertaken. Helen carefully obeyed all these injunctions, but was much longer accomplishing her task than one more accustomed to such labor would have been. But she did it well, and Miss Burke assured her of this, adding, however, that it took her a great while.

Helen soon became initiated into the mysteries of ordinary "house-work," and when the winter had passed she found herself thoroughly established in the kitchen.

But when spring returned her work was of a very different character. She watched and attended the hot-beds, and twice a week she accompanied Mr. Burke to the city, and aided him in selling the products of the dairy and garden. She had but little taste for this kind of employment. Her mild, retiring nature shrank from the busy scenes into which she was plunged in the crowded market, and she was very unhappy when obliged to listen to, and contend with some of the rude city servants, who seemed inclined to dispute her price but were eager to buy of her.

Mr. Burke's stand in the market was well known, and there were several families who depended entirely upon him for the supply of their tables. The neatness of every thing which he brought had not passed unobserved, while his pleasant manner had added not

a little to his success, and his new saleswoman was not likely to repel, but to attract buyers.

Among those who were always earliest at the stand of Mr. Burke, was an Irish girl, with whom Helen was much pleased. She liked her good-natured face; and the pleasant way in which she spoke of what she purchased, soon made her one of the market girl's favorites. Helen, not unfrequently, retained the choicest of her store until she came. When the spring advanced, the Irish girl inquired for strawberries, and seemed not a little disappointed when Mr. Burke told her there were fine ones in the field, but he had not time to pick them before he came to town. She said there were plenty in market, but they were much bruised, and seemed half decayed, and that her mistress, Mrs. White, was unwilling to have her family eat them, as she considered them very unhealthy.

While the girl was talking, a new idea crossed Mr. Burke's mind, and a benevolent one it was, too. In his anxiety to please, in this instance, he entirely forgot the profitableness of his conclusion, and promised that the next day Helen should come in with the single wagon with berries. She could pick them, he said, in the morning, and would be in the city about noon. Helen heard this proposition, and might have objected, but Mr. Burke told her that all she could make in this way she might have, and she was quite delighted with the idea of earning something which should be entirely her own.

When day dawned the next morning, Helen was ready for the meadow; for she was anxious to gather as many berries as she could. They were very large, and ripe, and abundant, so that her pail filled rapidly; and Mr. Burke soon joined her with another pail, which his industrious fingers filled before breakfast was

ready. Miss Burke, whose prudence would not suffer a trip to town for the berries alone, was, meanwhile, busied preparing something more substantial for sale, and when Helen started, she found a large can of cream, a bucket of pickles, and some fresh eggs, added to her store. Helen was a safe and experienced driver, but she had never before ventured so far alone, and a kind of desolate feeling came over her when she left the house. But "Old Gray" was a fast traveler, and Helen's imagination getting busily at work, the distance was overcome almost unperceived by her, and she was not a little surprised when she found herself at the ferry.

Nellie had just reached the stand, and was arranging her load a little more conveniently, when she perceived Mrs. White's maid approaching. A bright, noble boy was running before her, and she was leading a little girl, whose happy smiles were playing among the clusters of flaxen ringlets which she had shaken over her face. Helen thought she had never before seen so beautiful a child, and she determined, since the berries were her own, to fill the little basket which was hanging upon her arm. When they came up to the wagon, Betty, the maid, smiled, and said,

"Sure, and I must bring both of the children to-day, so eager are they for the berries."

They both danced with delight while Helen was measuring the fresh, red fruit. Betty, finding Helen had fresh cream for sale, and being sure that it was nicer than the milkman's, at whose stand she had left her pitcher, put the children into the wagon, and went back for it. While she was gone, Helen put a paper into the little girl's basket, and filled it with the berries, for which the child kissed her sweetly. In her delight, the child called, as loud as she could, to a gen-

tleman who was passing, "Doctor, see what I have got in my basket!"

The gentleman turned, and exclaimed, "Well, Miss Minnie, have you turned market girl?" Then glancing at Helen, to see into whose company his little friend had fallen, he stopped, and after gazing steadily at her a moment, he asked, "Are you Mr. Burke's girl?"

"Yes, she is," said Minnie, eagerly; "and she gave me these berries."

But Helen replied, "I live at Mr. Burke's, but I am not his daughter."

"How long have you been there?" inquired the gentleman.

"Ever since my mother died, and that was when I was a very little girl."

"Do you remember your mother?" he again asked.

"Yes; but she died a long time ago, and that was when I was a very little girl."

Then turning to Minnie, the gentleman said, "Can't you give that to the girl for giving you the berries?" at the same time offering her a piece of money; but Helen declined taking it, and the child said,

"O, she did not want any pay. Betty paid for those in the pail, and she gave me these."

The gentleman looked steadily and earnestly a moment at Helen, and then, tossing the piece of money into the wagon, said to her, "Buy what you want with that," and soon passed out of sight. Helen picked up the coin, which she found to be a dollar, feeling not a little disturbed at the manner in which she had obtained it. She was displeased with the way in which the gentleman gazed at her, and was entirely unwilling to receive the money.

Betty had by this time returned, and Helen, finding that the doctor was a frequent visitor at Mrs. White's,

prevailed upon Minnie to return the unwelcome gift to the donor. There was something in the doctor's keen black eye which would have rendered his gaze very unpleasant to Nellie; and the quick, nervous manner which he manifested, excited her astonishment.

The doctor was tall, erect, and slender, naturally very graceful and agile, and what many would style handsome; but so deeply disagreeable an impression had he made upon Helen, that she forgot almost all else in her thoughts of him. At times she endeavored to overcome these feelings, fearing it might be unjust thus hastily to form an opinion, so unkind, of a stranger. But why did he gaze so earnestly at her? She was nothing but a market girl; perhaps that was the reason, and he deemed it useless to use even common civility toward her. This she could not believe; and while she was driving toward home, she was revolving the matter in her mind. When she reached the ferry her surprise was greatly increased, for there the doctor appeared, and coming directly toward her, said,

"I will lead your horse on to the boat, if you please."

Helen thanked him, for she considered this rather a dangerous place, but hoped to see him leave before the boat pushed from shore. To her regret he remained until the boat had crossed the stream, and she was safely on the road, then, bowing, he took a side path, and walked almost as rapidly as she drove. Her natural kindness of heart would have prompted her to offer him a seat in the wagon, but her uneasiness forbade it, and her fears being not a little aroused, she hurried "Old Gray," who, conscious that he was "homeward bound," needed but little urging to increase his speed enough to leave the doctor far behind, and he was very soon entirely out of sight.

About a quarter of a mile below Mr. Burke's house

there was a sudden turn in the road, and within the angle a beautiful dwelling had been erected. It stood far back, upon a gentle rise of ground, and a smoothly graveled carriage-road wound around the thick green grove in which the house was built. Here and there among the trees pieces of statuary were placed, and two great marble lions guarded the entrance to the grove. At one side of the house was a large fish-pond; the edge was formed, not of a regularly laid wall, but ragged stones were thrown together in a careless manner, and over these vines of ivy and columbine ran gracefully. The taste which directed its formation was evidently that of a true admirer of nature in her most perfect works. A huge bronze dragon arose out of the middle of the pond, and Hercules was leveling his deadliest blow at its head, while its wrath was displayed, not by smoke issuing from the mouth and nostrils, but by jets of water which were thrown high above, and fell like rain back into the pond below.

Near this group stood an arbor built of rough poles; the roof was formed of tender saplings, braided together, and upon the center of it a rough statue of a wood-nymph was placed. The chairs, tables, and sofas were formed of like material, and the whole was admirably suited to the place. At the further end of the grounds a clear and rapid brook made its way, and seemed to divide this beautiful spot from the rougher scenery beyond, for just upon the opposite bank several huge rocks raised their heads, and imparted a look of wildness.

This was Nellie's favorite resort. She had often wandered about the place with her dear Miss Lane, and many a weary hour had they here whiled away after school was done; and now that that lady was gone far from her, she loved to linger there alone, and

think of her and the gentle Willie who so delighted to be carried there.

In her early childhood Nellie had grown familiar with the place. Every shady nook she could tell, and every deep basin in the brook, where the fishes seemed most happy, was known to her. The house had been unoccupied nearly all the time since she came, and her rambles about it had been wholly unrestrained. A family from the city had indeed occupied it during the warmest months of two summers, but they were unused to country-life, and seemed unhappy, even there. Nellie was unhappy, too, while they remained, for she did not venture to enter the grounds during their stay.

She had, when but a small child, noticed the graceful mould of the limbs of the various statues, and though there was a slight regret that the eyes were so inexpressive, she admired them, and could point to the most nicely turned joint, the best proportioned hand or foot. Though her's was no taught and practiced taste, it was refined and true, and she justly appreciated beauty. With the master-works of that perfect Artist who hollowed out the heavens, and framed the witching scenery of nature, she had been constantly familiar, and the plainest flower was rich with beauties to her eye, and the sweet melody of the songsters among the trees, was richer to her ear than the music of the fullest orchestra.

Nellie would sit for hours beside the brook, and watch the wild flowers upon its banks, as they kissed the ripples, or beside one of the deep basins, and notice the fish as they glided near the edge. From the stream to the house the ground rose quite rapidly, and upon that side of the rise the morning sun shone but obliquely, and its last rays, when setting, just touched it in the opposite direction. Nellie had noticed this

spot, and gave it the very becoming name of "Sunny Slope," for all day long it was shone upon.

She had never seen the inside of the house; the blinds were always tightly closed, and the doors locked; but she was sure it must be a delightful home. She knew that it had been built by a very wealthy gentleman, who had long since left the country; but that it was now owned by a Mr. White, living in the city, and who designed to spend his summers at the mansion, but whose wife, being very feeble, needed medical aid, and consequently was obliged to remain in town. When she passed the place on her return home from the market that day, she wondered if it were not the little girl's father to whom she gave the berries, and she felt quite certain that it must be. Consequently a new interest was awakened in the place. She was sure if the little girl whom she had that day seen, lived there, she should be a welcome visitor at the house.

CHAPTER XVII.

The next market-day Helen arose earlier than usual, and picked a small pail of strawberries, which she designed to take with her as a present to her little friend, Minnie White; for, from some cause, she felt strongly attached to the child. The berries were very red and ripe, and she was pleased to think how joyously they would be received.

Before they reached the city, and about a mile from the ferry, Mr. Burke left her to go alone, while he remained, as he said, to attend to a little business at a farm-house near by. Helen's success, the week before, had much encouraged her, and she drove on quite willingly. Betty's cheerful face soon appeared, and again she was accompanied by the children. Minnie caught sight of Helen, and letting go Betty's hand, she rushed through the crowd to Mr. Burke's stand, and almost breathless with excitement, began,

"Next week is my birthday, and mamma wants you to come and let her talk to you about my party up at your house."

"What did you say?" asked Helen, entirely unable to comprehend the meaning of what the child said.

"Mamma is sick, and can't have so much noise in the house, and I am going to have my party out at your house, and she wants to see you about the berries."

By this time Betty came up, and said to Minnie,

"If this is the way ye're going to do, it 's not

another time ye can come wid me to the market; it 's a grate risk ye run, sure, comin' alone through that crowd; did yer mother know it, it 's not a bit of a party she 'd allow ye; and it 's me that ought to tell her about it."

But her reproof was powerless upon Minnie, and she only begged her to ask about the party; and Betty, turning to Helen, said,

"Mrs. White would be plased to have ye stop at the house a moment."

But Mr. Burke had not come, and Helen told her that if she should drive away from the stand then, she should lose the most favorable chance for the sale, and she could not go unless she would come for her in about an hour.

Mr. Burke soon came, and Helen was ready to accompany Betty and Minnie when the appointed time arrived. Minnie was full of glee, and danced and skipped nearly all the way, much to Betty's annoyance, who was trying, meanwhile, to entertain Helen.

It was the hour when Mrs. White usually rested, and she sent for Helen to come to her chamber. Minnie led the way, through the parlors and hall, up the stairs. Helen had never dreamed of magnificence such as met her there. She could hardly walk over the velvety carpets, and she would have lingered to look longer at the beautiful furniture, but Minnie rushed along, and she was obliged to follow. When she entered the chamber, Mrs White was reclining upon a sofa, wrapped in a rich silk double gown, and a young girl stood by, fanning her. She was very pale and thin, but before she spoke to Helen, a pleasant smile lighted that pallid countenance, and she said:

"That will do, Jane, I thank you; you may rest now." Turning to Helen, who was standing a little

back, from a natural feeling of timidity, she continued, "Good morning, Miss Burke, take this easy-chair nearer me, if you please."

That was an ugly name which she gave her, Helen thought, but it was spoken so kindly that it sounded better than it ever had done before. She took the offered chair, but for a while it proved a very uneasy one to her, for she dared not sit down firmly, she sank so far back into the cushions.

"You were very kind," Mrs. White continued, "to bring those berries to Minnie, she is very fond of them. Are there more as nice as those on your farm, now?"

"O, yes, ma'am," said Helen, "a great many; they are better now than they have been at any other time."

"I thought so," returned the lady, "and next Tuesday is Minnie's birthday, and she wishes to have her little friends enjoy the day with her; but I am unable to endure the noise which, to be happy, they must necessarily make, and I have concluded to send them in the coach to our country-seat, which, perhaps you know, is near your house. The ride will benefit them, and I know of no reason why they may not safely play there perfectly unrestrained."

Minnie's face, as she listened to this, was eloquent with expression, and she interrupted her mother by putting her little hands upon those sunken cheeks, and giving her a long, sweet kiss; then rubbing her plump little face upon that broad, smooth forehead, she assured her mother how much she loved her.

"I sent for you," Mrs. White continued, as soon as Minnie had released her face, "to see if you would furnish berries and cream for their table. Do you think you can do so?"

"I know I can," said Helen; "I will pick them myself."

"Then I will depend upon you," said the other; "you can carry them into the grove when you see the carriage drive up. I suppose it is all safe there for the children, is it not?"

"Unless it be around the pond," answered Helen.

"O, I will be sure and caution them about that; and I think I need have no fears since they are all old enough to have some discretion about such matters."

Turning to Jane, who was looking out of the window, Mrs. White said, "You may give Miss Burke a glass of ice-water and some cake before she goes," and after she had said a pleasant "good-morning" Jane led the way down stairs. A better opportunity was then afforded Helen to examine the furniture, and while she looked and admired, she almost envied Jane her happiness in being even a servant in the midst of such wealth.

But there was something more than the luxury that wealth can procure which attracted Nellie, and excited this feeling in her breast. It was the kind and gentle manner of the lady who was mistress there, and to whom was committed, in a great measure, the happiness of those around her. The feeling of dependence, too, which was constantly choking Nellie's efforts to be contented, influenced her much, and her ride home seemed lengthened by the sad thoughts which crowded thickly into her mind. A dark cloud seemed to hang over her destiny, and her earliest recollections were of its rising. Though there appeared to her no "silver lining" to that early cloud, she lifted her heart in thankfulness that the darkness was no deeper, and sought holy submission to the will of Him whose infinite wisdom had marked all her way.

While she was eating the cake, a lady called, and through the door which was partly open, Helen could

distinctly see her. There was that in the face of the visitor which riveted her attention, and it appeared to be no stranger's countenance. The voice, as the lady talked with Minnie, seemed familiar, but memory was powerless to aid, and Helen was certain, after a little reflection, that she had been mistaken.

Little Minnie occupied much less time communicating the account of the expected party to the lady, than did Jane in announcing her coming to Mrs. White, and waiting her decision whether to comply with the lady's earnest request that she would admit her to the chamber. Mrs. White had been considerably disturbed that morning, and felt quite too feeble to entertain more company, but her desire to please overcame the conviction of duty to herself, and Mrs. Doxtater was received into Mrs. White's chamber.

Years had rolled away since Mrs. Doxtater so eagerly sought the society of Mrs. Lincoln, but though fortune had played unfeelingly with the latter, the former was unchanged. Her hopes, her aims, and her prospects were the same.

Her stay was informally long, and the invalid's weariness was increased by the regret she felt that Minnie had made the disclosure of the party, for Mrs. Doxtater had offered to add her children to the number, regardless of the difference in age. Without a manifest unwillingness that they should be of the company, Mrs. White could but consent to her proposition.

Minnie White was really beautiful. Hers was not that doll-like beauty of which some boast; nor was it the beauty of nicely-finished features which in themselves are beautiful, though wholly destitute of expression; but, in her frank, open countenance, lighted by a generous soul reflected in every feature, it was a difficult task to mark defects. Her flaxen hair hung in

graceful ringlets around a well-proportioned head, and her broad forehead spoke a more than ordinary degree of intelligence, while her natural kindness and affection, strengthened by constant association with her mother, rendered her the favorite of all who knew her. Pride, if indeed she ever possessed the pride which, perhaps, might better be called vanity, had been wholly rooted from her heart, and her child-like artlessness made her, at the age of ten years, almost as unsuspecting and confiding as an infant.

Like a sunbeam, Minnie's presence ever served to gladden those about her, and she was the joy and comfort of Mrs. White.

Her brother, Will, was quite unlike her. Ever since the morning that Will first set foot in boots, he had fully realized the fact that he was "father to the man," and though but three years Minnie's senior, he looked backward more than three times three hundred and sixty-five paces in his career manward upon her. He had, too, exalted ideas of his elevation in life. This, perhaps, was well; his pride proved a sure safeguard to him. He was too proud to mingle with the vicious or wayward boys of his own age—too proud to do any thing which should appear unworthy or degrading to himself—proud enough to maintain perfectly and honorably his standing among his associates—and too nobly proud to be unkind to any. He lacked that strength and decision of character, however, which is necessary to make the great man of the world; and though he might rank first in wealth, and first in success, he must still be lost to view when people come to do homage to the wealth of mind.

There was an ease and a lightness in Will's manner, which never suffered him to be disagreeble, but oftener rendered his society what might be styled refreshing.

His mother understood well his character, and she sometimes grieved as she thought of his butterfly career through life; but he had not one bad habit over which she could mourn, and as the fragility of the insect is forgotten when we gaze upon the beauty of its wings, so did his lightness become pleasing to her when she watched her cheerful and attractive boy.

The birds never awoke earlier than did Minnie White on the morning of her eleventh birth-day. She awoke from a night of happy dreams, she was sure, to a day of happy realities, and there was little rest for any of the family after the dawning of the first day of her new year. Three well-filled carriages, besides Mrs. Doxtater's, conveyed the happy party. It was a joyous time for the children, and their merry glee, which continued all the way, showed that their happiness was unabated.

Doctor Duval, Mrs. White's attending physician, accompanied them as a kind of guardian or director. This seemed the happiest day of all Minnie's life, and she beguiled the distance in planning sports for the party.

It was nearly noon when they reached the "country seat." The sun was high, and pouring down its rays with power; but the thick shade of the grove bade defiance to his intrusion, and afforded a delightful coolness to the happy company. Helen had been watching a long while for them, and shortly after their coming she approached. The berries and cream she had placed in a cool nook by the brook-side, and she only came to tell Betty where she might find them. Minnie ran to meet her, and listened attentively while she was communicating her message to Betty, who was, with the doctor, endeavoring to decide where to spread the refreshments.

When Helen had finished her errand, she turned as

if to leave the ground, but rather intending to seek a distant position where she might watch the sports of the children. Before she had reached the gate she heard Minnie's sweet voice calling after her, "Miss Burke, Miss Burke, won't you please stay to my party;" and turning round, she saw her little friend bounding at full speed down the road. She was pleased to accept this invitation, and immediately began retracing her steps. Before they reached the place where the company were gathered, Minnie called out again, "Doctor, see, she will come back."

This remark showed Helen that to the doctor, toward whom she felt so strong an aversion, she was indebted for this pleasure more than to Minnie's kindness, and she half regretted that she had not refused to return. Then her better feelings gaining the mastery over her prejudice, she tried to overcome her aversion, and enter heartily into their pleasure. But she was older than any of the children, except Louise Doxtater, and her brother Jack, and these manifested a decided determination to avoid her society. Conscious of her superiority in age, and determined soon to enter the ranks of the young ladies, Louise was constant in her efforts to gain the attention of Doctor Duval; while Jack took charge of the younger brothers who were of the party; and, consequently, she remained more a spectator of their sports than a participator of their happiness, except so far as she delighted in seeing them so happy.

The usually quiet grove rang with the sound of merry voices, and even the cold, mute statues, toward which nature seemed as cold and mute, were embraced and caressed by the gay company with as much apparent earnestness as if the marble really realized and appreciated caresses. The doors of the mansion were

thrown open, and the vacant rooms and halls echoed the tread of nimble feet, while even the fishes, quite unused to be thus disturbed in their miniature sea, were made to tax their swiftness in efforts to escape the pebbles which the boys aimed at them. The table was spread in the arbor, and, as the doctor rightly imagined, that the long ride had sharpened the appetites of the children, they partook of their refreshments quite early. Helen chanced to stand beside the doctor at table, but this annoyance was soon forgotten, as he was so kind and attentive, and her plate was filled with the choicest of the refreshments.

Louise Doxtater, who had taken her position just the other side of the doctor, noticed his companionship with Helen, and several times hinted that he seemed quite taken with the market-girl. To these remarks he did not deign a reply, unless one might have been read in the quick twitching of his sharp black eye, and the cloud of contempt which came over his features. The great pail of berries stood before him, but his prudence forbade him to open it until the sharpest cravings of hunger had been satisfied, and when he did so, he found a beautiful wreath of wild flowers laid upon the white paper which covered them.

The sight of the flowers was sweeter than berries to the refined taste of the doctor, and with many exclamations of admiration, he lifted up the chaplet, and said, "Now you must crown a queen."

His suggestion was accepted with a unanimous clapping of hands, and he further suggested that the one who arranged the flowers should be the chosen of the company.

At this Louise's vexation became complete, and she, spitefully, suggested, "I think those weeds would better become a country girl than us."

Helen was too near for this to escape her ear, and while she pleasantly declined to wear the wreath, there was a feeling in her heart which almost compelled her to accept the proffered honor, when little Minnie begged her again and again to be their queen, for a kind word falls with greater power when it follows such harshness.

The relish of Helen for the luxuries before her was lost, and she was glad when she could leave the table. She wandered, unobserved, as she thought, down her favorite "sunny slope," and seated herself beside the brook. But she was not long alone. Doctor Duval saw, and followed her.

"That wreath was very tastefully arranged, Miss Burke," said he, when he came near. And sitting down by her side, continued, "I imagine you have a taste for the beautiful in nature, since you seem willing to leave the company to enjoy this pleasant retreat."

Helen was confused, and without reflecting, said, "I always like to go alone, I enjoy it very much."

"Perhaps I am an intruder then," said the other. "Excuse me, will you?"

"O, I did not mean that!" exclaimed Helen; "you know what I meant."

"I think I do," said the doctor, "and taking this for granted, I shall feel a perfect freedom in remaining. Do you come to this place often?"

"Yes, sir," said Helen. "Mr. and Miss Burke are tired when they get through work, and I don't like to trouble them with talking; so I come here and think."

"And have you lived this kind of life always?" asked the doctor.

"O no, sir!" she replied. "When Willie was alive I was with him all the time, and he was very fond of talking with me."

"You mean Mr. Burke's son, who was always an invalid. I visited him when he was quite little, and knew that he could not live, and that there was little use in doing any thing for him."

"Then you knew Willie?" said Helen, her interest in the doctor beginning to increase rapidly.

"Only professionally," he replied; "though I have been told that he was a fine boy."

"O, he was so good!" exclaimed Helen, and then her eyes beginning to fill with tears; the doctor immediately changed the subject.

Louise Doxtater, who kept an eye on the doctor, had meanwhile drawn several of the company toward the brook, and they were entertaining themselves with running down the slope to see how near they could come to the water without running in. Helen observing it, said:

"I have never seen 'Sunny Slope' look so beautiful as it does now while the children are playing upon it; but I am afraid some of them will fall into the water, and it 's quite deep here."

The doctor checked them, and then questioned Helen as to the name which she had used. She blushed slightly, and replied, "I forgot that this was a name of my own adopting. I should not have used it."

"It is certainly very pretty," said the doctor, "and I think it a very appropriate name for the place."

The little girls had now gathered upon the edge of the brook, and were busying themselves in watching the fish; but Louise, whose vexation was so great because the doctor seemed wholly regardless of her presence, manifested a little disposition to annoy them, and when the girls were least expecting it, she would push them toward the water and then catch them. This

sport she seemed to enjoy much; it was just suited to her mood at the time.

At length, Louise caught sight of Minnie, who had followed a finny pet quite a distance below where the doctor and Helen were sitting, and she ran lightly toward her. Minnie, being all intent upon the fish, was easily disconcerted; a slight push sent her far beyond the reach of Louise, and a sudden splash in the water told what had happened. In plunged the doctor, but the child was far below him, and he could make but slow progress in the ragged bed of the brook.

She was swiftly floating further and further from him, and, despite his own utmost efforts, might have been drowned. Helen knew every turn in the brook, and, quick as thought, she recollected where, a little below, the banks nearly approached, while the stream rushed, quick and deep, through the narrow channel. It was there so narrow that she could almost reach across it. Like an arrow she darted over the ground, and reached the spot just in time to catch the dress of the child as she was being carried through the place. Her clothes so increased her weight, that Helen was unable to draw her out, and she could only hold her tightly, and cry for assistance. The doctor sprang to the bank, and ran to her aid. He succeeded in rescuing the child, but she was insensible; and while he made every effort possible to resuscitate her, Helen ran home, with almost incredible speed, and soon returned with dry clothes of her own to put on.

This adventure was a termination to the play; and when Minnie had sufficiently recovered, the party entered the carriages to return.

During that day the doctor had done much to inspire Helen's confidence and esteem, and she might have entirely overcome her aversion to him, had he

not again offered her money as a compensation for rescuing Minnie. She positively refused to receive it, saying that the act merited no reward; and she was sorry that he should think her willing to accept any.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A YOUNG lady once playfully said, "*To love* and *be loved* is all I live for;" and there was more real truth in that hasty remark, when applied to all mankind, than even she herself realized.

In this world the heart seeks, naturally, some *one* congenial spirit to share its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears, upon which it may lavish its strongest affections, and from which it may expect a meet return. Such should be the relations always between those whose fortunes the marriage bond has linked together; and when such an attachment has been formed and enjoyed, how blasting, how withering is the blow which dissolves the connection!

This blow had fallen heavily upon Mr. Burke, and its weight had been more fully realized, and a deeper loneliness had settled upon him, since Willie's death. What wonder! The noon-time of his days was passed, his sun had crossed its meridian, and the shadows of life were lengthening before its declining rays. Fancied joy had long since failed to please; the world was all world-like to him; and if the young heart needs the comfort of an echoing heart, most certainly one of maturer years, like his, needed a counterpart. Mr. Burke saw and felt this, and he determined to begin to love and live anew.

Had Helen been less the child of nature, and more perfectly skilled in the ways of the world, she might have seen this long before it was made known to any

other. She might have guessed why, almost every market-day, Mr. Burke wore his best suit of clothes to town, until Miss Burke became exceedingly alarmed on account of his increasing pride; and why he always left the wagon when he reached widow Hapwood's, "to transact a little business," and sent her alone into the city, often not coming to her until she had disposed of the entire load; and why, as they rode along, near the house, he was so observant of the land, and so often remarked upon its productiveness, and expressed so much interest in the forwardness of the crops, sometimes even suggesting how valuable such a farm would become in the course of a few yèrs, on account of its proximity to the city.

Helen then little dreamed that Mr. Burke's scythe should one day glitter in those meadows, that his hand should bind that ripened grain, and that when these crops were gathered, he should sing their "harvest home."

The remembrance of these circumstances lessened her surprise, when he disclosed to his sister and herself his intention to marry the widow. At the announcement of this fact, the tiger in Miss Burke's nature became clearly manifest, and all sisterly affection seemed suddenly overcome. She was perfectly inexorable; and after less than a week's delay, left the quiet home which she had enjoyed so many years.

Miss Burke descanted loudly upon the cruelty of stepmothers, and felt it to be a sin longer to mourn that Willie had gone to that happy home, where sorrow can never enter, and assured her brother that in taking a widow for a second wife, he was but nursing a viper in his bosom. More closely than ever did she then hug her single heart, as if to guard it from the slightest wanderings.

Mistaken mortal! How little did that sister realize that she was pushing her boat through the rough sea of life with but a single oar. No wonder that it was constantly turning, and that she found her journey so toilsome. Like the weight in the scales, she was striving to rise, while there was no balancing power in the opposite side. Like the bird with a broken wing, she saw the clear sky of happiness above her, but she was unable to soar aloft and bathe in its brightness. She was forgetful of the truth, that when the inspired bachelor asserted "she is happier if she so abide," he followed only his own judgment, and spoke only of the well and the better, while the superlative, *best*, he did not venture to declare. She even read her Bible with a single pair of eyes, and failed to learn from it that love is the life of living, that those who love most purely and most perfectly, most truly live, and that there are aching voids in "*single blessed*" hearts.

Miss Burke's departure from her brother's house threw upon Helen responsibilities which she was hardly able to bear. Though she was well acquainted with all necessary kinds of work, she was unused to the management and care of household duties to any considerable extent, and this only hastened the consummation of Mr. Burke's union with the widow. Helen had grown almost wild with suspense in regard to her future course, and anxiously and fearfully did she long to have Mr. Burke mention the subject to her.

Mrs. Hapwood and her two daughters had visited the farm of Mr. Burke, and had carefully examined the house, but they paid little or no attention to Helen. She heard them express their preference to remain at their own homestead, and saw the words "To Let" placed over the gate at the end of the lane, but not one word was said with regard to herself. Her suspense at

length became too great to be longer endured, and she ventured to inquire of Mr. Burke, on the Saturday evening previous to the Wednesday appointed for the marriage, where she was to stay. His heart was softened when he heard her question, for he thought of her loneliness and dependence. She was endeared to him by many acts of kindness and by sweet associations, and he knew that he could no longer offer her a welcome home. He was about to link his life and fortune with those who felt no interest in her; and though they might be induced to receive her, it would be with an unwillingness which would, most certainly, render her miserable, and he only answered her question, by asking,

"Where would you like to stay?"

The whole world offered no home to her, and the weight of a desolate heart almost crushed her. Her clear eyes were dimmed with gathering tears, and she replied,

"I don't know."

Mr. Burke saw her deep emotion, and his sympathy beginning to unarm him, he said, in a consolatory tone,

"Well, don't trouble yourself about that; you shall go with me awhile, and when we have more time we will conclude what it is best for you to do."

"I do not think Mrs. Hapwood wishes me to come," said Helen, sobbing audibly, "and I can not stay where I am not wanted."

There was no use in concealing aught from her longer, and Mr. Burke said, mildly,

"You know, Helen, we must all depend, after we are old enough, upon our own efforts. You have been kind to me and to Willie, and ever since you were a little girl I have been pleased to take care of you, and should be glad to do so still, but my circumstances are

now to be changed. Mrs. Hapwood's family is already quite large, and I don't think she would wish to make additions to it, though she will be perfectly willing that you should stay with us until I can find a good place for you in some family in which your work will enable you to support yourself."

Helen felt the justice of the explanation. In the darkness of her present desolation, the years which she had spent with Mr. Burke looked bright and happy, and almost unconsciously, she threw her arms around the neck of her benefactor, and thanked him, again and again, for all his past kindness to her.

"It is growing darker, I see, Nellie Lincoln," said Barbara Dunn, entering the kitchen where Helen was at work, on the day after the sign had been placed over the gate. "Don't you see it is? And it is because your light went out on the water. You must be coy, now, very coy; remember what I tell you."

"How, coy, Barbara?" asked Helen, whose troubled state of mind rendered the unintelligible expressions of the crazed woman doubly fearful.

"Coy of the storms," replied the maniac, uttering a terrible laugh; "coy of the storms, for it is growing very dark, and I see the light that went out on the water is not going to shine again here. Ah! Nellie Lincoln, be very coy of the storms!"

"We are going to move away, Barbara," said Helen, anxious to divert the thoughts of her visitor, "and I shall not be here to bring you any more milk or food."

"I know it," replied the other; "but you are not going where the light burns. No, Nellie Lincoln; remember I have told you you are not going where the light burns, and you must always be coy of the storms."

"I am going with Mr. Burke," said Helen, again.

"But the light will not follow where he goes," con-

tinued the other; "you, yourself must be coy of the storms, for I tell you there is death in the storms."

"O don't talk so any more," said Helen, beseechingly; "I can not understand you, and you frighten me."

The maniac uttered another and a more horrifying laugh than before, and replied, "You need not fear what I say, it is the darkness which you are to fear, and it is growing darker all the time. Yes, Nellie Lincoln, I warn you to be coy of the storms, for there's death in the storms, and your light went out on the water."

"On what water, Barbara?" again asked Helen.

"Don't you remember the water, child?" said the other, with a look of astonishment; "the great water which put the light out."

Helen had known old Barbara a long time. She knew her kind and gentle ways, but her presence then filled her with fear. She at length began working, apparently unconscious of the maniac's presence, hoping, that if unnoticed, she would leave; but, heedless of incivility, the unwelcome visitor remained.

Old Barbara had a very peculiar manner of dressing, from which she never deviated. Her bonnet was black, with white trimmings, and her dress was always sufficiently short to display her stockings, one of which was white, and the other black. She was evidently not old in years, but the word "old" is generally applied to characters like her without reference to time. Her hair was snowy white, but her face, which still retained the freshness of middle life, showed that time's frosty fingers had not whitened it, but that the breath of cruel circumstance had done the deed.

There were many stories told of crazy Barbara, but none with any certainty. Some people said that she

had loved, and that he whom she had loved had proved untrue. Others said that he had died, and more believed that she was always thus. She had wandered alone into the neighborhood, and conscious of the kindness of those among whom she had fallen, had made the place her home, and no certain clew to her origin could be obtained. Her visits at the farm-houses were generally short, but this morning she was inclined to protract her stay, and it was evident that something which she considered important weighed upon her mind.

"Be coy of the storms, Nellie Lincoln! O, be coy of the storms!" the crazed one at length exclaimed, excitedly. "Remember the light that went out on the water—be coy, very coy of the storms, for there 's death in the storms!"

"O, you frighten me, Barbara. Don't talk so!" said Helen again, earnestly.

"O, it was a frightful storm when the light went out," continued the other; "very frightful, but I know you have forgotten it. Yes, I see you have forgotten it, but I warn you be coy of the storms, for it is growing darker now, very much darker now. So remember what I tell you, there 's death in the storm, and your light went out on the water, and the little light that was left is lost. O, be coy, Nellie Lincoln, very coy of the storms." Thus she ended her incoherences, addressed to Nellie, and walked down the lane to the road. She paused a moment before the sign on the gate, and shaking her head ominously, muttered to herself, "The light has gone out, and Nellie Lincoln must be very coy of the storms."

The next Sunday, Helen spent much time by the grave of Willie; and while she remembered his angel spirit, she sought a firmer hope and a clearer title to

that mansion in the heavens where she knew she should be reunited to him. Monday and Tuesday were busy days for Helen. Wednesday saw the farm house vacant; and the business which Mr. Burke so often stopped to transact on the way to market, finally settled. Helen's reception at the new home was just such as she had anticipated. She was passed by unnoticed, or looked upon with a scornful eye. There were visitors present in the evening, but she was not invited into the parlor. When she heard their cheerful voices she was content to remain in the kitchen with Katrine, the German girl, for cheerfulness was quite uncongenial to her desponding spirits. No one ventured to ask her to assist in waiting upon the company, but she offered her services, and aided in such things as should not call her into the parlor.

The Misses Hapwood were bright, energetic young ladies of eighteen and twenty years. Three years before they had gone to the city to attend a boarding-school. They were then simple, unaffected, and lovely girls. Their course of training at school was thorough and complete, and their education was finished, not only in regard to what they were to learn from books, but in all the accomplishments which any receive at such institutions.

During this process of training, *the girls* had been completely metamorphosed, and returned to their home, in every respect, according to the modern sense of the term, *young ladies*. They considered that they were born to move in a higher sphere than was the market-girl who had been thrown into their family. Providence, they saw plainly, had made them to differ, and they had not the slightest inclination to interfere with its wise arrangements. Besides, being not a little opposed to the step which their mother had just taken,

though their good sense had influenced them to conceal their displeasure, they were less willing to receive the encumbrance of Helen than they otherwise might have been. Helen, meanwhile, felt keenly their coldness, but the gentleness of her nature did not suffer her to make it known. She, at first, hoped, in the quiet of her own chamber, to find some comfort, but she shared Katrine's room, and it was so unlike the tidy one to which she had been accustomed, that she was glad to quit it at early morning. Though nothing had been said to her upon the subject, she saw plainly that the kitchen was considered the proper place for her, and she had no desire to be with those who were happier without her company.

Mr. Burke often stopped and talked familiarly with her, but this only recalled the scenes of other days to her memory, and sharpened the thorn which was lacerating her sensitive heart. Though she toiled hard and willingly, yet she could not feel that her labor was regarded by the family as any compensation for the permission to remain, and she longed to hear something said in regard to her final removal.

CHAPTER XIX.

The sultry, busy days of harvesting were past, and Helen remained still at Mr. Burke's, almost hopeless that a change in her situation would ever come. She had not sufficient independence and energy of character to prompt her to unaided efforts in making any arrangements for the desired change. On the contrary, her timidity prompted her to shun that contact with strangers, which she must necessarily undergo to accomplish her desires, and she suffered patiently, hoping that, ere long, some other event would lead to the desired result.

But the long delay of Mr. Burke in coming to a conclusion on this delicate subject, had almost deadened Helen's hope. Once or twice she had ventured to mention it to him, but he only assured her that he would see to it by-and-by. The truth was, that it was hard for him to break the cord by which she was bound to him, and he was loth to cast upon the world one who had gained so strong a hold upon his affections. Little did he think how much more painful to her was his inaction than the separation itself could be. But man may not always control his own destiny or the destiny of those committed to his care. "There 's a divinity that shapes our ends."

Early one morning, the team was standing before the farm-house door, and old "Gray" and "Charley" were pawing the ground, animated by the fragrance of the load of fresh hay which they were to draw to market,

and the spirited "Whitey" was standing uneasily before the vegetable wagon, which also was loaded, when John, the hired man, came into the kitchen and told Mr. Burke that some of the props under the granary floor were leaning, and that unless it was soon attended to, the whole would fall in.

Mr. Burke saw that immediate attention was necessary, and that his trip to town must be given up. But the wagon was filled, and the vegetables would be so withered as to be unsalable if they stood until the next day, and for the first time since his marriage, he asked Helen to act in her old capacity as market-girl. She made the single objection that she was afraid to venture with so spirited a horse as Whitey, but Mr. Burke immediately overruled this objection by telling her that he would as soon trust her with the reins as he would trust himself; still it was with great reluctance that she yielded to his wishes.

All the way to town Helen kept behind the load of hay, so that, in the event of any accident, she might call to John; consequently, her ride was very tedious. Whitey snuffed gayly, as he walked behind the tempting load, and sometimes, despite her efforts to curb him, he would run close to it, and draw out long locks, and shake his head with an air of satisfaction as he swallowed the savory mouthful.

It was pleasant to Helen to be once more at her old stand. Among the buyers she recognized several familiar faces; but the most welcome one of all was that of Betty. Helen had never heard from Mrs. White's family since the unfortunate occurrence at the party, and she inquired, eagerly, how Minnie had endured the wetting.

"Sure," said Betty, "'t was a very short time she took to get quit of that hurt; she 's a stout girl; but

it 's her mother that 's poorly, very, just now; and a grate bother we 're havin' with Jane. Sure, she 's no pity at all, or she 'd not be lavin' her mistress now, for Tim Satterly."

"Is Jane going away from Mrs White's?" inquired Helen.

"Yes, and that directly," said the other. "She 's set to get married, and she 'll not hear a word we can say to her; it 's unkind, very, in Jane, for good girls is scarce now, and Mrs. White will be bad off without one just at this time, for she 's poorly, very."

"Do you think she would take *me* to live in Jane's place?" asked Helen, animatedly. "I will go if she will."

"Sure," said Betty, "it 's not what she 'd be wishing to make a sarvant of ye; it 's very often she 's wishin' for the day when she 'll be strong enough to ride out and reward ye for the saving of Miss Minnie, as ye did."

"O, I do not wish any reward," said Helen; "but I would like to come and live in Jane's place."

A new hope had been kindled in Helen's breast, and she was happy in the prospect which she had of living in the family of Mrs. White, and ceasing to be dependent upon those who seemed so unwilling to aid her.

John was a kind-hearted man, and he readily consented to watch Whitey while Helen went with Betty to see Mrs. White. She found that lady indeed much more feeble than she was when she saw her before. She was lying upon the bed, and when Helen entered, put out her thin hand, and clasping Helen's, thanked her, with tears, for her kindness in saving Minnie.

"I have been hoping," said Mrs. White, "to be able to see you myself, and express to you thanks which I could intrust no others to convey to you."

Helen's proposition was accepted readily, and the light-hearted girl forgot every thing else in her happiness. Minnie kissed her affectionately, and repeated again and again her joy that her kind market friend was soon to come and live with them. The next Monday was the day appointed for Helen to enter upon her new duties; and the hope of a speedy removal from her unhappy home, at Mr. Burke's, with the promised reward of wages sufficient to place her above all dependence, was more than she could bear. More than once, on her way back to the wagon, she felt the tears of joy coursing down her cheeks. John heard her story with pleasure, for he had long noticed her unhappiness, and added to her store of information the knowledge which he had of Mr. White's family.

The transition from sadness to joy is seldom more perfect under any circumstances than it was in Helen's heart after her interview with Mrs. White. She felt that she almost lived a new life, and she saw the "silver lining" to that cloud, the darkness of which she had before been unable to penetrate. She commenced her journey homeward with a light and cheerful heart. She had gone but a short distance, however, when a paper fell from the rack which John was driving just before her. A breeze carried it quickly across the road, and directly under Whitey's feet. The horse gave a frightful leap, and went bounding like a fury down the street.

At the outset of this accident, one wheel was torn off from the wagon by the collision with the rack. The skill and strength of the most powerful man would then have been useless and weak to restrain the frightened animal. Helen clung to the uppermost side of the wagon, but her head reeled as it was thrown up and down until, consciousness entirely forsaking her,

she let go her grasp, and was thrown violently against the stone pavement. On rushed the horse, his fright increasing at every step, and seemingly bent upon completing his work of destruction, until, overcome with exhaustion, he fell.

When Helen was taken up from the pavement she gave scarcely a sign of life. She was carried immediately to the city hospital, and properly attended to. The external injuries, though severe, were not as alarming as the protracted unconsciousness. During the tedious operation of adjusting the broken bone of her left arm, not a single manifestation of sensation was observed, and all restoratives seemed, for some time, unavailing. Near midnight a slight trembling of her frame was perceivable, then a contraction of the lips, as if there was an effort to speak, but soon she settled back into the stupor from which she seemed, for a moment, to be arousing; and it was not until the next day dawned that reason returned to her wandering mind.

It was late when John reached the farm house. He had been delayed a long time in caring for Whitey, and the family, whose anxiety was excited by his absence, were not unprepared to hear of some accident. They listened eagerly to John's story, and Mr. Burke was inclined to attach the blame to himself, since he had insisted upon sending Helen, against her will, with so spirited an animal. The fragments of the wagon, which John brought home upon the rack, showed how terrible the catastrophe must have been, and gave abundant proof of the truth of his statement.

On receiving this sad intelligence, Mr. Burke would have gone immediately to the city had he not been overruled by his wife. She insisted that it was quite too late to make the journey that night, and that the horses were tired; besides, the girl was well provided

for at the hospital. When the family were again quietly seated in the sitting-room, Mr. Burke asked advice of Mrs. Burke in regard to the best means of removing Helen to their home.

"O, I should not think of doing so at all;" she answered, decidedly. "Helen is just where she should be now, and is much more comfortably situated than she could be here."

Mr. Burke expressed his doubts upon the subject, and added, that he felt it to be his duty to provide for her when she was in trouble.

"That can not be your duty," said the wife; "she 's not your child, and she can never repay you for what you have already done for her. There will, no doubt, be heavy expenses incurred before she is again restored, and I can not see why it is your duty to meet them any more than it is to pay the pauper taxes of all your neighbors."

"Very true," said the elder Miss Hapwood, "very true, and she will need the constant care of some able person. I really do not see who can be spared from our family to attend her. We seem to be fully employed now."

Mr. Burke, who was beginning to wear that "subdued look" which, as it is said, characterizes some married men, could not brave the opposition of both mother and daughter.

"Yes," continued Miss Hapwood, after a moment's pause, "she will be much better off where she is. I am sure, if it were my case, I should prefer the hospital to any other place; and," she added, as she took a light and was about to retire, "you will think so yourself, Mr. Burke, after you have given the matter a second thought."

After Mr. Burke and his wife were left alone, he re-

marked to her that Helen did not seem like a pauper to him, that she was almost as near to him as an own child. "She has lived with me," he said, "a number of years, and has always been a faithful and an affectionate girl."

"May be," Mrs. Burke replied, "but you can not expect to keep her always, and John tells me that she herself was designing to leave you next Monday, and had made all arrangements for living with a Mrs. White, in the city."

Mr. Burke felt a little grieved that Helen should take such a step without even consulting him, for, unexplained, her conduct seemed to show a disregard of him. Finding his opinions and those of his wife on the subject running in exactly opposite directions, he was quite willing to discontinue the discussion, and retire.

CHAPTER XX.

When Helen awoke to consciousness she looked anxiously about for some familiar face, but the place and the faces which she saw were unknown to her. Doctor Duval was standing at the head of the bed on which she was lying, so that she did not see him until she asked, hurriedly,

"Where am I? What is the matter with me?"

At this the doctor stepped before her, and said,

"Don't be alarmed, Helen."

"O tell me," she again exclaimed, hastily, "what am I here for?"

"Don't you remember that your horse ran away with you yesterday?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, "but was I hurt much? I did not know it; is my arm broken?"

"Yes," said the doctor, "it was fractured, but it is in place now, and if you remain quiet will be healed soon."

At this she burst into tears, and the doctor, fearing the effect so much excitement might produce, endeavored to quiet her by a promise that if she would wait until she should be a little more rested, he would tell her all; but her sobs and tears were unrestrained for a long time. Perhaps she was influenced by pain, or perhaps she recollected that with a broken arm she could not perform the duties which would be required of her at Mrs. White's, and feared that she had lost the opportunity of securing the situation; or she might

be suffering from the thought that she would now be a double burden upon those with whom she had been living.

When Helen had become a little more calm, she looked about the room again, and strove to recall some remembrance of it. But this was vain. It was quite unlike any one she had ever occupied. It contained but little furniture, and that was of the plainest kind; only such as was absolutely indispensable. Finding it impossible to determine any thing about the place, she turned to the doctor, and inquired,

"Doctor, where am I?"

"You are where you will be well provided for," he answered. "Don't you think you are as comfortable as it is possible for you to be, now?"

"Yes," replied she, "but whose house is this, and who brought me here?"

"It is a house built expressly for the sick; and those who took you up, yesterday, after you fell from the wagon, brought you here."

"Then I am in the hospital, am I?" she said, calmly.

"Yes;" and the doctor inquired, "do you not think it the best place for you?"

"I suppose it is the only place for those who have no real home," she answered, and again the tears gathered in her eyes as she thought of her loneliness.

The sensitive, sympathetic nature of the doctor was touched at this, and he said, soliloquizingly, "There is a *real* home for us all beyond the skies."

This was the first time in months that any person had spoken to her of the home to which she was looking; and hoping that he might prove a counselor and friend to her now, she ventured to reply, "For all the good, you mean, doctor."

But he only answered, "For all."

"But all are not holy," continued Helen; "and only the holy can live in heaven."

"But man must die before he can enter heaven," said the doctor; "and all that is evil in his nature perishes at death, and the holy, God-like part lives in eternal happiness."

The doctor, meanwhile, had seated himself in a chair near the foot of the bed, and sat holding his head bent down into his hands; but he was soon roused from his meditations by the entrance of the matron of the hospital, with Mr. Burke and the elder Miss Hapwood.

"Good-morning, Doctor Duval," said the young lady; "and good-morning, Helen. Why! how comfortable you look here! Doctor," she added, "must we thank you that such kind care has been taken of our friend?"

The doctor answered, coolly, "I attend to cases in surgery at the hospital, and came to set Miss Burke's arm;" then bowing, hastily left the room.

But Mr. Burke, being desirous to know exactly the extent of Helen's injuries, followed him into the hall, and inquired, "How do you find her, doctor?"

"She is very well," he replied; "but through the night I was fearful she might never be conscious again."

"Do you consider her out of danger now?"

"O, yes," said the doctor; "she will be strong again in the course of a few weeks. It was a pretty serious affair, though; and it is a great wonder that she is living."

"I suppose so," said Mr. Burke, "from what I can learn; but not to detain you too long, she has been several years in my family, and I am anxious to do what is right by her, and should like to ask your advice about moving her."

"She had better remain quiet," said the doctor; "but she may be moved, with safety, if it is desirable; so that is a matter left wholly for you to decide. You understand your obligations and wishes better than I do." Then bowing politely, he left.

While Mr. Burke and the doctor were in the hall, Miss Hapwood had been enlightening Helen upon the benefits of city hospitals, where every comfort is provided for the sick, and every attention is shown to them. She drew a beautiful comparison between the unfortunate in cities, and those in country-towns, where, generally, no provision is made for them except in the "poor-house." She admired the neatness of Helen's bed, remarked upon the fine view from the window, the kindness of Doctor Duval, and the good-natured look of the matron. Had Helen been blind, she might have believed that she was in a little paradise, Miss Hapwood's admiration of every thing about her was so exuberant.

When Mr. Burke returned, Miss Hapwood continued, "Helen seems very contented here, and, indeed, any girl of good sense would be. I think she is far better off than she could be made anywhere else; besides, the ride would so disturb her arm. I think we had better leave her where she is; don't you think so, Mr. Burke?"

"Perhaps she has some choice about the matter herself," he replied; then turning to Helen, "How do you feel, Helen?"

"Very comfortably, I thank you," said she, "except it is tiresome to hold my arm in one position all the time."

"I know it must be; but it was a narrow chance you ran of being killed outright; for my part, I can't see what saved you."

"Why, there is nothing left of the wagon," inter-

rupted Miss Hapwood; "and I am afraid Whitey is ruined. Isn't it a pity? I expected to have such a nice saddle-horse of him. However, it is fortunate you were not killed."

These were comforting remarks to Helen, and she said, bursting into tears, "I am sorry; but I could not help it. I did n't want to drive him."

"That is nothing at all," said Mr. Burke, not a little vexed, "nothing at all to your injuries; there are horses enough in the world; but we have come down to see what we can do for you."

"I don't know that I need any thing," said Helen.

"Well, had you rather go home with us, or remain here, under the circumstances?" said he.

"Your question hardly needs an answer, Mr. Burke," again interrupted Miss Hapwood; "of course she prefers to stay where she can have the daily attention of her physician."

But Mr. Burke waited a reply from Helen, who said,

"It is hard to be sick among strangers, but—" and she stopped. Had Mr. Burke been alone with her she might have opened her whole heart to him, but she could not, and she gave vent to her feelings in weeping.

"You are a little nervous, I guess, Helen, dear," said Miss Hapwood, "and I don't wonder. But all this shows how much you need quiet. You will get acquainted with the matron in a little time; and I have no doubt that you will love her as well as you now do us. And besides, some of us will come to see you often."

Helen saw plainly how she might best gratify those who had just been called dear to her, and she answered, firmly,

"If there are no objections to my remaining, I will stay here."

Mr. Burke's pity again prompted him to say what he knew would displease his step-daughter.

"You shall never want for a home while I can provide you one, Helen, and do not remain here a day unless you choose to do so."

"I think it will be better for me," said Helen. "I could not ride very comfortably with my arm in these braces. I thank you for your kind offer, and for all your kindness to me, but I presume I shall never live with you again."

"What do you mean, Helen?" said Mr. Burke, touched with the thought of separation.

"I mean that I am old enough to take care of myself, now, and when I get well I shall try to do so. I did have a good place offered me, yesterday, and I accepted it on condition you did not object. The work was not very hard, though a little confining. I am afraid I have lost that place, but I hope I can find another."

"That was very well, indeed," said Mr. Burke; "but I believe I would rather have you make it your home with me, Helen," he added, almost weeping, "you seem like a child to me."

Just here Miss Hapwood looked at her watch, and assured Mr. Burke that it was high time they were going, as it was past ten o'clock; there were several errands to be done, and she wished to be home to dinner. She then kissed Helen a good-by, expressed a wish for her speedy recovery, promised soon to come again, and the two left.

Helen was then quite alone, and long did she reflect upon that offer of a home.

"Without hearts there is no home." And she felt that that sweet name could never be applied by her to the one Mr. Burke had offered. Through almost all

her life she had never known, by experience, the sweetness of the word, and she had grown almost weary of life. But she had become accustomed to sorrow, and had learned to bear it well. The heart may be schooled, and fortune does much toward teaching it.

At evening, Doctor Duval called again. Helen was alone. He looked at her long, and thoughtfully. This was very unpleasant to her, but considering it a physician's privilege, she endeavored to disregard it. It was some time before he spoke, and when at last he did speak, he merely suggested, "You are feeling better, now?"

Helen hardly knew whether this was designed as a question or not, but she answered, "Yes, sir," and after a moment's pause inquired, "How long do you think I shall have to stay here?"

"Only three or four weeks," he answered; "but you will not be able to use that arm very much under two or three months."

"And can't I do work before that time," she again inquired, sadly.

"O, yes," said the doctor, "a little easy work."

There was little to encourage her in what he said, and Helen, thinking he did not seem inclined to talk, turned her face to the wall and was quiet. In this manner she remained until she was entirely lost in thought, and almost forgetful of the doctor's presence. When she again recollected herself she looked to see if he had gone; but he was seated in a chair tipped back against the wall, his chin rested upon his bosom, and he seemed wrapped in a moody silence.

How long the doctor remained in the room Helen could not judge, but it appeared to her to be a great while. Rousing at length, suddenly, he left without saying a word, but as he passed between her and the

lamp Helen thought she saw tears glistening on his cheeks, and she hoped that this was so, and that he was weeping in sympathy for her.

From the hospital the doctor went to Mrs. White's. The same moody silence hung about him, and the family, who had often seen him appear in this manner, paid little or no attention to him. They well knew his eccentricities, and left him to his own reflections, until Mrs. White, thinking he was never going to waken from his reverie, said,

"Doctor, you must do something to stop your having the 'blues.' Don't you know that you are making your own life miserable, and robbing us of a great deal of pleasure which we might otherwise enjoy from your society."

"The world is full of misery," he replied, "and I must be willing to take my share."

"But Providence," continued the lady, "has given you every thing to render you happy, and it is ungrateful in you thus to make yourself wretched. You must think how many there are who have not the means of enjoyment that you possess, and be thankful that you are so favored, and not give up to imaginary misery."

"You have it exactly," said the doctor, "I can't be happy while I see so many wretched about me. If I had been born without a heart I might enjoy the comforts I possess; but now they are worthless. I am sick of myself because I can not help those I wish to aid; and I am sick of the world because there is so much misery in it. I am sick of living, and were it not for reproaching my Maker, I believe I would end my existence immediately."

Mrs. White saw that she had led her friend to thoughts exactly calculated to waken the keenest feelings of his nature, and fearing he might wander into

one of those discussions which she had long ago ceased to encourage, she said, calmly,

"You must do what you can to make those around you happy; and be happy yourself in making such efforts."

"I can't be happy, it is useless to try," he answered, decidedly; "there is wretchedness enough in this one city to make the whole world miserable, would the world but look a single moment at it. Why, just an hour ago, I visited a young lady, in every respect superior to any one of those who move in our fashionable society, who is as wretched as a person is capable of being, and I can't do a thing to help her. She lies there at the hospital now, suffering for just what I have more than I know how to use, and yet I can not help her."

"If she is an object of charity," said Mrs. White, "I can not see why it is not in your power to assist her."

"She is truly an object of charity; too ill to help herself, and prevented from receiving the assistance of others by nominal friends into whose hands she has fallen, but who are what I esteem the worst kind of enemies—too proud to let others help her, and yet too selfish to help her themselves. Of this she is fully sensible, and it is the greatest source of her misery."

Doctor Duval had little charity for modern benevolence in any of its forms, and Mrs. White, desiring to know more of the matter, inquired who the sufferer was.

"The girl who lives with Mr. Burke."

"Not Miss Burke the market-girl?" exclaimed Mrs. White, starting from the pillow against which she was resting.

"Yes," said the doctor, and again Mrs. White inquired how she was injured.

"She was thrown from the wagon, yesterday, and dashed against the pavement with such force as to fracture one arm, and injure her seriously otherwise. She has lived with Mr. Burke ever since he was married, in the very midst of abundance, and yet is perfectly wretched. She has been nearly killed in their service, and yet they will consent to leave her in the hospital. I believe she is glad to be left, for she can not fail to read their feelings when they are as plainly shown as they were this morning by Miss Julia Hapwood. One kind word, from a *real* friend, or one affectionate caress, would do more toward restoring her than all the medicine she can take; but these I can not give; the customs of society forbid it."

Here the doctor again settled into that same moody silence, manifesting, at times, a kind of nervous restlessness, as if his thoughts were too harrowing for endurance.

Mrs. White at length roused him by remarking that it was truly a great misfortune, and one in which she was a small sharer, "for," she added, "she was to come and live with me on Monday. I have been much pleased with her, and anticipated much pleasure in having her in my family."

"'T is just like this world," said the doctor, impatiently; "just when our hopes are brightest, the darkest hour seems to be nearest. She would be happy here. She is a girl of the finest feelings, and her associations now are such as continually wound natures like hers. I am thankful that a God rules the world, for I know all will be right at last; but I can't see why Providence takes such strange means to bring about its ends."

"Doctor," said Mrs. White, "upon these matters we have opinions widely different, and it seems useless for

us to enter upon a discussion of them now. But I have been thinking, if Miss Burke is able to be moved, I will gladly give her a room and every comfort until she is able to take Jane's place in assisting me. I shall be happy to do any thing for her, for I feel that I can never repay her for her efforts in saving Minnie.

Little Minnie had, until now, been a quiet listener, but she here added her welcome to her mother's.

"I will go after her in the morning with you, doctor, can't I?" she asked.

Just here, Mr. White, who had remained in the sitting-room that he might examine his paper undisturbed, called from the foot of the stairs, "Doctor, are you having a sociable up there? if so, I should like an invitation myself."

"Do, papa, come," cried Minnie, "and hear about Miss Burke. She has broken her arm, and is very sick."

Mr. White was not unlike his wife in kindness and generosity; and after listening to the account of the misfortune, he said, "I will send the carriage for her to-morrow, if she can be moved. How is it, doctor?"

"I should think it prudent to let her remain as she is a day or two, at least," said the doctor; "but I think it would be well for you to call in the morning, and make her the offer."

"O, I must leave that for you and Minnie to do; you may offer all I have; but I was never made to talk to sick people; was I, wife?" he said, turning to Mrs. White.

"I never object to what you say," she replied, cheerfully.

"O, I know I am always most agreeable to you," he said, laughingly; "but other people don't think as

much of me as you do. I shall have to deputize the doctor to do the calling for me."

Helen spent a tedious, restless night. Besides the pain which she experienced from her injured arm, there was a mental sorrow which drove sleep from her. Two or three times the matron called upon her, and once she asked if she would like to have her head bathed. Helen replied that it would be refreshing, though she feared it might tax her too much, as she seemed very busy. But the matron spoke kindly to her, and said she would send another to do it; and for an hour a young girl bathed her temples, which relieved her much. Helen felt little inclination to talk, and she then enjoyed the most rest that she had done since she was brought to the hospital.

CHAPTER XXI.

"JOHN, you may go and get a dozen fresh oysters," said Mr. White, the next morning, to his coachman, "and tell Jane to make a nice stew of them; and when Doctor Duval and Minnie go to the hospital, you may carry it for that sick girl they are going to see; and you can wait there till the doctor tells you whether she needs any thing else. I think you had better bring Minnie back; the doctor will have several patients to visit, and she won't want to stay so long."

"I may stay if I want to, can't I, papa?" said Minnie, who overheard this.

"O, yes, as long as you like. Learn to be nurse, if you choose."

"It 's a strange likin' ye 'll have, if ye 'll be left there long," said John. "Six wakes I stayed there with a faver, and it bothers me to tell which I was gladdest to get quit of, the place or the faver."

"That will more than pay for them, John," said Mr. White, tossing him a half dollar, "and you may keep the rest for pocket-money; but, remember, Irishmen love liquor, and you are Irish, so get out of the saloon as quick as you can after you get your oysters."

"Thank ye, sir—thank ye, sir," answered John. "Never fear for me, sir; I 'm a timperance man, intirely."

Minnie had often seen oysters cooked; but she felt so deep an interest in these, that she was at Jane's elbow all the time she was preparing them.

Minnie's call was wholly unexpected to Helen, and the kind offer which she brought almost overcame her. She had not hoped for friends like these; and she looked upon her misfortune in the light of a blessing since it had revealed them to her. Minnie remained with her while the doctor attended the patients in the other rooms, and assisted her while eating the breakfast she had brought.

Just as the doctor was returning to Helen's room, he met Mr. Burke, and said, "Perhaps you would prefer to see Miss Burke alone. I will wait and give you the opportunity."

"O, no," replied the other; "but I should like a little conversation with you before we go in, in relation to her staying here. I hardly know what is best to be done. My wife and her daughters are entirely unwilling she should be brought to the house. They have more to do now than they can attend to, and they feel no more interest in her than in any other poor person; but I am strongly attached to her, and wish to do what is right. I am willing to hire some one to attend her."

"There seems to be a better way provided for her," said the doctor; "the lady with whom she was engaged to work wishes to take her now, and will give her the best of care."

"It is strange she should be willing to take one she is not acquainted with," answered Mr. Burke.

"Not so very strange, either," replied the doctor; and then he related the incident of Helen's saving Minnie from drowning, and told how grateful Mrs. White felt toward her.

Mr. Burke was surprised that he had not heard of this before, but remarked that it was just like Helen not to tell any thing in her own praise.

Helen seemed inclined to accept Mrs. White's offer,

and Mr. Burke did not object, but he seemed to hesitate about giving her up entirely, just at that time, and under such circumstances.

When Mr. Burke returned from the city that evening, and acquainted the family with Helen's prospects, the vexation of the young ladies was complete. The esteem and friendship of Mr. White's family they earnestly desired to secure, and they feared lest the ill-treatment they were conscious they had shown Helen, would be made known to them.

"We must call upon her immediately after she goes to Mrs. White's," said Miss Julia, "and carry her some present."

"And by calling often upon her," said Mary, the younger sister, "we shall become better acquainted with Mrs. White. Perhaps it will all work to our advantage yet."

"But maybe Helen will say things of us which will make her dislike us," said Julia.

"I don't think she is such a girl," said the other. "She never said much, any way, here. How I wish I knew better what she was."

"And there's Doctor Duval, the richest beau in the whole city, seems to take a great interest in her," continued Julia; "you may be sure it was through him Mrs. White made her the offer."

"Mr. Burke said so," said Mary.

"He never did pay us much attention in company, and I don't believe he likes us very well; and if Helen tells him any stories, he will cut us entirely," remarked Julia. "I should n't mind, if it was almost any other gentleman. I should n't wonder if he should fall in love with her yet. It would be just like him."

"Why, what an idea, Julia," said Mary, "he is over forty, and she is n't more than sixteen, if she is that."

"That is always so. Bachelors are forever fancying the youngest of the girls," answered Julia, "but I don't know about his taking a servant-girl when there are so many of the upper-ten-thousand who would be glad to get him."

"There 's no danger of that," said Mary, "and much less that he will take either of us."

"I don't know about that," replied the other; "I am going to set my cap for him, and you 'll see how well I 'll succeed. I shall meet him yet at Mrs. White's. He is very fond of flowers, and I 'll carry Helen a beautiful bouquet the next time I go, and it will attract his attention, I know. How I do wish we lived in town," she added, "I declare it is like shutting us out from all advantages to keep us here."

"Just think of what we have been saying," said Mary, bursting into a loud laugh; "why we talk as if it was the chief end of one's existence to catch a husband."

"May just as well say it as to think it," answered Julia, "and I 'm certain I 'd rather never have been born, than to be an old maid."

"There is one alternative, at least," said Mary, "if you can't catch a husband, Julia, you can enter a nunnery, and take the vail. I really should think it advisable."

"Come, Miss Mary," said Julia, "this is no laughing matter. Just think how ashamed you would be of an old maid sister."

"I don't know about that," said Mary. "When I get nicely settled in a house of my own, it would be fine to have a good maiden sister like you to help me."

"How provoking! I don't know but I should get vexed with you, if I did not believe you to be joking."

"I never was more earnest in my life," said the oth-

er, "I only wish your name was Margaret, so that I could call you Aunt Peggy."

"You impertinent huzzy! Take that light and be off to your own room, and don't let me hear any thing further from you to-night," said Julia, half-jestingly.

"O don't send me to bed so early," said Mary, beseechingly. "Just think, I'm almost twenty."

The young ladies had been alone during this conversation, but here Mrs. Burke entered, and Julia sat down to enjoy communion with her own thoughts, while Mary began reading the last paper. She had read but a few minutes when she burst into a violent fit of laughing.

"What is it?" asked Julia.

"I'll tell you in a moment," and after another hearty laugh, she read as follows:

"'Terrible accident. Yesterday, as the adopted daughter of Mr. Burke, a farmer residing about three miles from the city, was driving home from market, where she had been to sell vegetables, the horse took fright, and ran with such violence as to throw her out upon the pavement, fracturing one arm by the blow, and injuring her otherwise considerably. She is now at the hospital, and it is hoped that she will recover from her injuries in the course of a few weeks.'"

"That is what I consider an advertisement much to our credit," she continued. "Public notice given that we allow a step-father's adopted child to be left at the hospital."

Mrs. Burke and Julia could not be satisfied until they had read it themselves; and the former consoled herself by saying that very few people would ever think of reading it, and fewer would think of believing it.

"The whole thing is provoking," said Miss Julia.

"The idea that we would send her to market, and then allow her to be left at the hospital. How in the world did that editor find out all that!"

"There 's one feather for that cap you talk of setting, Julia," said Mary.

Both the mother and daughters were not a little chagrined to have the matter made so public, but determined to conceal all knowledge of the fact from Mr. Burke, conscious that had his wishes been gratified, they would have been spared this mortification. They were discussing the propriety of destroying the paper, and thus keeping it from him, when he entered the room and inquired for it. The paragraph soon met his eye, as it was the first under—"city news." He read it aloud, and said that he considered such a notice very much to his discredit, and gave it as his opinion that the wiser course would have been to have had Helen brought immediately home.

But their mortification did not end here. The reports from the hospital appeared daily; and about a week after, it was noticed that, "the daughter of Mr. Burke, who was so severely injured a few days before, has been removed from the hospital to the house of Mr. White, in whose service she was intending to engage as waiting-maid." The press will meddle with the private affairs of people.

Mrs. Hapwood's house had long been a favorite resort for many of the young people of the city. The ride from town was just long enough to be pleasant in a moonlight summer evening, and the cheerful farmhouse was very inviting in the cold evenings of winter. The welcome of the young ladies was seldom less cheerful. The marriage of Mrs. Hapwood was generally known to their acquaintances in the city, and to the daughters it proved rather a source of annoyance

than otherwise, but the notices which had been circulated in regard to Helen rendered their mortification complete.

Just one week from the day on which Helen was taken to the hospital, she was assisted by Doctor Duval and Jane into Mr. White's carriage, and carefully supported by pillows. When she had been placed in an easy position, John came to shut the door, and said to Helen,

"And is n't it plased ye are for the change ye're makin'? Sure ye did well to get into the favor of a lady as ye did." Without waiting for a reply he jumped to his seat and drove away. When they reached the house Mr. White, who was standing in the door, called out,

"Well, doctor, what will you charge by the year to do my gallantry?" and coming down to the carriage, he continued, "Miss Burke, I am very glad you are here at last, for Mrs. White has lost a pound of flesh every day since you went to the hospital, she has been so troubled with fear that you were not comfortable. John has made her believe there is n't a worse place than that outside of the inquisition."

"And that same is true, sir," said John.

"O, I know it, John," said the other; "that's what made you so little. You lost flesh and bones both, the six weeks you had the fever there; if they had kept you another week there would n't have been any thing left of you at all."

Helen had never before seen Mr. White, and she hardly knew how to reply to his jesting remarks, and was glad that he had turned his conversation to John. The room into which she was taken was a neat and pleasant one at the side of the house. A plain carpet was upon the floor, the bed was covered with a white

spread, and an easy-chair stood beside it. Upon the table, before a mirror, stood a vase of beautiful flowers. Minnie was there to welcome her, and assured her, again and again, that "this was her room forever, after she got well, and all the time;" and she continued: "The doctor put this bouquet here; but he did not know any one saw him. I guess he likes you, or he would n't have brought it."

"O, I guess not," said Helen, quickly; "he is sorry for me because I have been so badly hurt."

"Well, mamma does, and she is so glad you have come. She says you sha'n't be left alone any more, for she thinks she should n't have had me now if you had not helped me out of the water."

"Minnie," interrupted Jane, who at this moment entered, "your mamma says you must sit down very quietly and not talk any, or else go down stairs till Miss Burke rests a little, for she thinks she must be tired."

"I 'll sit still right here," answered Minnie; "and I won't say a word till she talks to me."

Minnie kept her promise not to talk any; but she sat in the rocking-chair, and rocked furiously every moment, except every fifth one, when she stopped and leaned forward to look into Helen's face, to see if her eyes were closed.

And her eyes were closed, not in sleep, but to offer the incense of a grateful heart before the throne of that Being whom she had found to be, indeed, a "Father to the fatherless."

Helen was too unsuspecting to attach any meaning, like that which Minnie had suggested, to Doctor Duval's kindness toward her; and she did not for a moment admit the supposition. She had not a thought that there was any thing in her to be admired, and she

entertained only feelings of gratitude toward those among whom she had been thrown. She had lost, in some degree, her aversion to the doctor, though she disliked his manner, and particularly the moody silence he maintained while in her room. She was sure it was shown more when in her presence than at other times, for she could distinctly hear his hearty laughter when he was in other parts of the house.

CHAPTER XXII.

Helen's injury was a fracture of the large bone of the fore-arm; and after she had recovered a little from the weakness induced by the shock to her nervous system, she was able, by carrying the arm in a sling, to sit up the greater part of the time. After she had been at Mr. White's two days, during which Minnie had been her almost constant companion, entertaining her with stories, or bringing her books from the library, Jane opened her door, and said,

"Miss Hapwood has called to see you. If you are ready I will bring her up here."

"Certainly," said Helen. "You are very kind, Jane."

Jane made no answer to this, but said to Minnie, "You 'd better go below, your mamma says, while the lady is here."

"How long will she stay?" inquired the child, who disliked having her visit shortened in this way.

"'Twould be well for you," answered Jane, "if she staid a long while; you 'd be out of this room a little more."

"She does not trouble me any," said Helen.

"I don't expect she does," muttered the other, just loud enough for Helen to hear, and went down stairs with Minnie, to show Miss Hapwood the way to Helen's room.

"Good-afternoon, Helen," said Miss Julia. "Why, how comfortable you look."

"I am very comfortable, indeed," said Helen; "every thing is very pleasant here. I only wonder why I am treated so kindly."

"No wonder at all," said the other; "such girls as you are not to be found every day, and city people will take them at any price. You will more than pay for all this when you get well."

"I don't think so," answered Helen; "but I shall do the best I can, I 'm sure."

"O, I know you will; you always do, and you can't think how we miss you at home; it seems as if our main stay was gone. But where is Mrs. White? I did not see any of the family while I was in the parlor," she added.

"She keeps her room," said the other; "she is very much out of health."

"I should like to see her," said Miss Hapwood. "Does n't she see company?"

"Only her particular friends," answered Helen. "But you can inquire."

Just here Minnie came rushing in with a bouquet, and exclaimed, "Doctor Duval brought you this; he says he thought you loved flowers, and he bought this for you. He will come in in a minute."

The bouquet was one of rare beauty; and Miss Julia blushed, with a mingled feeling of vexation and jealousy, when she saw it. At first she was inclined not to notice it; but hearing the doctor approaching, she began praising it loudly, and as soon as he entered, exclaimed,

"Good-afternoon, Doctor Duval. You must be a gentleman of excellent taste. I really think it a pity that some of us who are so fond of flowers could not get into your good graces. That carnation is magnificent."

"I am an admirer of flowers," replied the doctor, "and consider it my privilege to give bouquets to my patients. I think them quite beneficial to those who appreciate them, as Miss Burke does."

"You are very kind," said Helen. "I thank you much."

"You are very welcome," answered the doctor; "but," he continued, "I fear I am interrupting your visit. I will come in again," and turned around to leave, but Miss Hapwood detained him, by saying,

"Not in the least, doctor. Do come back. We see so little of you, you should not deprive us of your company now. Why is it, do tell me, that you do not mingle more in society?"

"My desire to be tolerated prevents me," said the other. "I fear I should be considered a public nuisance should I impose myself upon community to any greater extent than I now do."

"You are fishing for a compliment, I am sure," said Miss Julia, "and you shall have it; I really think you are one of our most agreeable young gentlemen."

"I seldom jest, Miss Hapwood. I meant what I said, and I consider it any thing but complimentary for you to advance such an opinion of me," he replied, coolly. At the close of this remark Miss Hapwood, glancing at her watch, exclaimed,

"What have I done! It is time for the last omnibus, and I can not get to the station before it leaves, and I surely can't walk home."

"My carriage is at the door," said the doctor, "and if you will ride in it, I will drive down to the station with you." She bade Helen a hurried good-by, and entered the doctor's carriage. He drove rapidly, but it was useless, they were more than ten minutes too late.

"What shall I do?" said the young lady.

"You will have to favor some of your friends with an unexpected visit," said the doctor.

"That would be impossible," said the other, "I must be at home this evening."

She seemed thrown upon his gallantry, and he could but offer to take her in his carriage. Nothing surely could have pleased her better, though she expressed much unwillingness to put him to that trouble. He made but little effort to be agreeable, and Miss Hapwood was distressed lest she should fail to be entertaining, and she wondered upon what subject he could be interested. She exhausted her store of knowledge upon flowers, books, and medicine, but was unable to draw him into any thing like an animated conversation, and little more than an occasional yes or no fell from his lips during all the ride. When they had reached the farm-house, Mary, who was looking down the road wonderingly, since the omnibus had passed without bringing Julia, exclaimed,

"Well, I really thought you had been left in town, but I see now you preferred to ride with Doctor Duval. Doctor, allow me to suggest that you have driven a one-sided carriage a long while, and I really think it looks better as it now is."

"Maybe," said the doctor, as he was assisting Miss Julia to alight, "but you know I don't see the defect when I am in the carriage, consequently I can not speak so certainly of the improvement."

"Indeed I do not consider you very complimentary," interrupted Miss Julia. "I expected you would say you never enjoyed a ride so much in your whole life, and never hoped to again, unless it was under similar circumstances. I am half inclined not to tell you how much I am obliged to you for your kindness."

"I spoke," replied the doctor, "of the improvement in the appearance of the carriage, but if it will please you more, I will say that you have been very entertaining, and I am sorry you had not a more agreeable companion."

"That will do vastly better," said Miss Hapwood; and she continued, "it is past supper-time, and you must come in and take something to eat with me; John will see to your horse."

"No, I thank you," said the doctor; "I shall be at my boarding-house soon."

"But I can not consent to your returning without tea," continued the lady.

"You must excuse me," he said, in a decided tone of voice which prevented any further urging, "I have several patients to visit to-night, and I must be back as soon as possible."

"Well, I believe I shall have to catch a fever or the small-pox before I can receive a call from you. You would n't think of asking to be excused then, would you?" asked Miss Julia, jestingly.

But he only replied, "My ride does not extend so far from town. Good afternoon, ladies."

"Good afternoon," they replied, and he drove away.

"He 's the strangest man I ever saw," said Julia to Mary, as they walked into the house; "I am half-inclined to dislike him, and yet I can't."

"Why, what is the trouble? I expected to see you in fine spirits after your ride with Doctor Duval," said her sister.

"I believe he 's a real crusty fellow," said the other; "I could n't make him talk all I could do. He was as mum as an oyster all the way."

"I imagine the truth is," said Mary, "you were so

agreeable, and talked so fast yourself, that he did n't get a chance to say a word."

"No such thing," said Julia, a little vexed, "he would n't laugh, either, at the comical things I said; and it really provoked me, for you know when one makes an effort at wit, and fails to excite a laugh, how cheap one will feel."

"As cheap as I did," said Mary, "when I made the suggestion about the carriage. I don't think I shall like him for a brother-in-law. I think you had better look for some one else."

"We don't know him well enough to decide what he really is," said the other. "This is certain, at least, he is quite popular in the city, among those who know him well, and he seems perfectly at home at Mr. White's."

"How came he to bring you home?" inquired Mary, "I almost forgot to ask."

"To tell the truth," said Julia, "I stayed past the hour for the last omnibus, purposely, so that I might be invited to spend the night at Mr. White's; but when I pretended to discover my mistake he was in Helen's room, and offered to take me to the station, but the omnibus had gone, and he could do no less than bring me home."

"That 's the way you played the card, is it?" said Mary. "It is just good for you that you are so disappointed."

"But I almost forgot to tell you," continued Julia, without seeming to notice her sister's remark, "he brought Helen a beautiful bouquet. Is n't it strange how he came to fancy her? Just as I told you the other day; and I believe he loves her now."

"Foolishness, Julia," said Mary. "Why, I believe you are jealous. I am ashamed of you, you act so

silly. But come, Katrine left the supper-table standing for you, and it is n't right to keep her waiting so long. She 's had a good deal of trouble this afternoon. Mother has had the sick head-ache, and the Dominie called, and, of course, I was obliged to talk with him, which left her all alone."

Before Miss Julia had finished her tea, Mary came running in to tell her that Mr. Doxtater's carriage had stopped before the gate, and she was quite sure Mrs. Doxtater had come to spend the evening with their mother, as she had often promised to do. Katrine went to answer the ringing of the door-bell, and soon returned, saying there was a company of young ladies and gentlemen in the parlor who wished to see them. One of the ladies had given her name, Miss Doxtater, saying that would be sufficient.

"It can't be Louise, can it?" said Julia. "She is n't old enough to be riding with young gentlemen, is she? How does she look, Katrine?"

"She has dark colored eyes and a big mouth," said Katrine, "shocking big for a lady."

"That 's Louise," said Mary; and the two went into the parlor. Besides Jack and Louise, there were two of their cousins who were paying them a visit. After the introduction, Mary sat down to entertain the strangers, while Julia began questioning Louise.

"Why, how is this?" she asked, "I did n't know your mother would let you be riding evenings with gentlemen. She told me the last time I saw her that she considered you a little girl yet, and intended to keep you out of company a while longer."

"She would like to if she could," said Louise, "but she can't help herself. I 'm going to begin to go a little. And now I 've a good excuse: I have to go to

make it pleasant for our cousins. She scolds some, but I keep out of hearing, and don't mind it much."

"What a girl you are!" said Julia; "I suppose you are in school yet."

"Yes, I can't get out of that yet; but I'm almost sixteen, and then I shall not go another day—you see if I do. I mean to make my 'come out' on my birthday, and then I sha'n't pretend to ask ma what I may do and may not, any more."

"I thought you always did about as you pleased," said Julia.

"So I do; but I ask ma's advice for the sake of peace, and then go and do as I choose—fact. I don't think she'll make any objections after I am sixteen. She thinks girls ought to be young ladies at that age."

"I suppose I may expect an invitation to that 'come out,' as you call it, can't I?" asked Julia.

"Of course you can. I mean to invite all the young people. Ma says I must n't think about it so long beforehand, but I will. Who shall I invite for a beau for you?"

"I can tell you," interrupted Mary, who overheard Louise's question; "the rich bachelor doctor."

"What! Doctor Duval?" exclaimed Louise.

"No such thing, Mary," said Julia. "Don't you believe her, Louise."

"Well, well; I was intending to have him myself," said the other.

"I am sure I sha'n't stand in your way at all, he does n't seem to fancy me," said Julia.

"You can't make me believe that," said the other. "I shall invite him, and tell him you are coming. But you will have one rival, for I shall try my prettiest to cut you out; and we'll see who will be successful."

Jack here declared that Louise seemed bent on hav-

ing the oldest beau New York afforded, for she had been for six months trying to flirt with a widower."

"Well, I have an excellent reason for doing so," said Louise. "I expect to have the charge of Jack until he is old enough to take care of himself, and I want a husband who can have a fatherly oversight of him, or my task will be too great. Since he is so backward he will, probably, be on my hands a long while."

"There, Mr. Doxtater," said Miss Julia, "I don't think you will interfere with your sister's arrangements after this."

"I don't think of doing so ever," he replied; "I know her to be wise beyond her years."

"Louise," said Julia, "I am going to leave you and try to entertain that cousin of yours. Mary seems to have forgotten him. What did you say his name was?"

"Ashton," she said in a whisper; "I don't know but you 'll find him a little verdant. He came from the country."

"Be careful, miss, how you talk about country cousins," said Julia. "I 'm going to see him;" and taking a chair nearer him, she inquired if this were his first visit to the city.

"It is," he replied.

"Then I imagine," she continued, "your home must be some distance from here."

"I am residing in Boston at present," he answered. "The distance is not great; but I have never, until now, had any business leading me this way."

"You are a Yankee, then, I imagine," said Miss Julia, making an attempt at wit, "all but the cotton umbrella and gingerbread."

"And their sharpness and good sense," he added.

"You must leave me to judge as to that matter, Mr. Ashton," said she.

"You are but little acquainted with me," he responded, "and I was helping you to form a correct opinion. Unaided and hasty opinions, I suppose you know, are often mistaken ones."

Miss Hapwood made no answer to this; but seeing Louise, who had been wholly unnoticed since she left her, beginning to grow a little restless, she asked, "Louise, what do you call Boston?"

"In Massachusetts, somewhere," said Louise.

"I asked *what* you called it," said Julia.

"It 's a town, I suppose," she replied.

Mr. Ashton smiled.

"You should n't ask her such hard questions," said Jack, "just because she 's smart. She has n't finished going to school yet."

The company here arose to go; but Miss Hapwood prevailed upon them to wait and eat some fresh fruit.

"I hope you succeeded better than I did in your attempt to talk to Mr. Ashton," said Mary, after they were out of hearing. "I was so wicked, he would n't pay any attention to me."

"What do you mean?" said Julia, wonderingly.

"Why, he 's going to be a minister," said the other; "and I was unfortunate enough not to find it out until I had made several very trivial speeches."

"I wonder," exclaimed Julia, "why Louise did n't tell me of that. I would have talked real pious to him. I can, if I try. But Louise will have a fine party, I promise you; and we must each get a dress suitable to wear, and have it all ready beforehand. What shall they be?"

"Something I sha'n't think of to-night. O, I 'm so tired."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Helen's recovery was slow. A month passed, and she was yet able to leave her room only occasionally. Minnie's vacation had expired; and Miss Jenks, her governess, had returned, and she was nearly all day employed with her studies. Helen was, consequently, much alone. But her time passed profitably and pleasantly, with little exception, for her love of reading was fully satisfied. Mr. White's library afforded much that was interesting to her. Experience had made her thoughtful beyond her years, and she loved to peruse works which sometimes fail to interest those much her seniors. Mrs. White had observed her taste in her selection of books, and had often remarked upon it before those who were in her room, little conscious that it was displeasing to any.

"It is strange," she said, one evening, to Mr. White, "that such a girl should read with as much interest as she seems to, 'The Philosophy of a Future State,' Shakspeare, and Milton. I think it betrays more than an ordinary degree of intellect, and great strength of mind."

"Certainly it does," replied the other. "I knew from the first she would be some remarkable character in the end, from the simple fact that you fancy her so much. I knew, long ago, that you never fancied people who were not brilliant, and that 's the reason you consented to be Mrs. White."

"I took you," she said, laughingly, "because I could n't get rid of you."

"Then you mean to say," said he, assuming an air of sadness, "that you did n't marry me because you loved me!"

"No, indeed, I could n't help loving you, you were so kind and faithful to me," she answered.

"O, that is it," said he; "and you made a husband of *me*. What do you intend to make of your other protège? *She* is more promising than *I* ever was."

"I never expect to make any thing of her; but I do intend to give her all the advantages I can," said Mrs. White. "If she had been born in other circumstances, she would have been the pride of her parents, and an ornament to any society in which she might move. I really feel guilty about making a servant of her."

"Wife," said Mr. White, jestingly, "I don't see how that conscience of yours ever lets you eat a single morsel of food when there are so many hungry in the world."

"It does reproach me," she replied, "at times when I am enjoying luxuries bought with money which might go far toward relieving them."

"Doctor Duval," responded Mr. White.

"No! Doctor Duval never said one word to me upon that subject," said she.

"But that is his theory, exactly. I wonder what kind of a couple you and he would have made?"

This, and similar conversations Jane had often heard, and they seemed to arouse the bitterest feelings of her nature toward the object of Mrs. White's admiration, whom she considered only her equal in station. Helen had often noticed that her food was brought to her in a state which rendered it almost impossible for her to eat it. The meat was cut in pieces too large, and with

but one hand she was unable to cut it smaller. The morning after this conversation it was more unmanageable than ever, and she was obliged to leave it until Jane came to take the dishes, when she asked her if she would please cut the meat finer for her.

"And have n't you eat your breakfast yet?" she answered, spitefully, and commenced cutting it as she was desired. "People that have some one to wait on them all the time, don't care how much work they make for others."

"I did not know that it would trouble you," said Helen, "but I could not eat it so large."

"I suppose it won't," said the other; "I shall only have to run up stairs once more after the dishes, and have a second fuss washing them."

"I am very sorry," said Helen, "very; but I will try and carry them down myself; I think I can, easily, by going twice."

"O, no!" said Jane, "it 's no matter. Mrs. White would think you were killed if you had to carry your own dishes down stairs."

Helen was grieved. She would much rather have dispensed with the breakfast entirely than to have caused any unpleasant feelings, and she began to reflect whether her course toward Jane had not been different from what it should have been, and concluded that she had not been as familiar with her as she ought. When Jane came to remove the tray upon which she had brought the food, Helen said, kindly,

"Jane, why don't you come and sit with me, sometimes? I know you might, for I hear you often in the kitchen, when Mrs. White does not need you."

"I did n't think ladies cared about visits from the servants," she replied.

"I am sure," said Helen, "I am full as much a

servant as you are; it is your place I am going to take."

"I know that, and I wish you'd get well, for I don't want to stay here much longer. I meant to have been away before this, and I would n't have staid a day longer than I agreed to, if Mr. White had n't promised me a nice present if I 'd stay till you got well. But I begin to think that 's going to be forever."

"O, no," said the other; "the doctor says it will be but a short time now."

"I 'm very glad to hear it," answered Jane; "but it is n't the having to stay, alone, that makes me mad; there are other things."

"It is n't any thing that I have done, is it?" asked Helen, earnestly.

"I don't know," was Jane's reply, "but it was n't so before you came. But I can't talk any longer, I must go to my work."

"Well," said Helen, "won't you come and sit with me the first opportunity you get, and we 'll see if I can make it pleasant for you."

"I 'll come if you want me to," said Jane, "to-night, after Mr. White comes in. I should like to, very well, for I can assure you I 'm not very fond of sitting in the kitchen with them two Paddies."

"Who do you mean by the two Paddies—John and Betty?" asked Helen.

"Of course I do," answered Jane, "ain't they Irish? and who wants to hear them jabbering? it fairly makes me nervous."

"O, I think they are very kind and pleasant," said Helen.

"I 'm glad if you like their company," said the other, as she went out of the door. "It 's very well, since you 've got to stay with them."

From this conversation Helen thought she had discovered the cause of Jane's unpleasant manner toward her, and she determined, at evening, to reconcile her if possible. Her dinner was brought in much more inviting order, and she hoped that already a reconciliation had been commenced. It was far from her wish to live at variance with any, and she would willingly sacrifice her own comfort to promote the pleasure of another. She was pained to hear Jane's remarks, for they seemed to intimate that she had been the source of unhappiness to her.

Jane was prompt to keep her engagement, for she was anxious to learn something of the character and origin of one whom she had heard so much praised.

"You see I 'm come as I told you," said she, when she entered the door. "Mr. White is in early to-night, and I don't know but you 'll get more of me than you want."

"O, I think not," said Helen; "I was feeling a little lonesome, and wanted company. I get very tired sitting here holding my hand in this way."

"And I get tired," continued the other, "running about all the time; but I ain't going to do it much longer."

"I am glad of it, if you want to change. It is n't pleasant to stay where we are not contented."

"And I 'm tired of being waiter for other people," said Jane; "and I 'm going to have a home of my own, where I will be mistress myself."

"I am very glad to hear it, Jane," said Helen; "I heard you were going to be married, and I hope you will have a good husband."

"I should n't take any other," said she, in a satisfied tone of voice; "but I suppose you feel too stuck up to come and see me after I get to keeping house."

"Certainly not," said Helen; "what makes you think so of me? I am not proud, for I have n't any thing to be proud of. I think I ought to be very humble indeed, since I am obliged to depend entirely upon charity for support."

"I should think so," said Jane; "but when people get taken a little notice of they 're most always proud, if they won't own it. But I 'd a thought Mr. Burke would kept you, well off as he is. I don't think it looks well for his wife's girls to be so much better off than his own girl is."

"But I 'm not his daughter," said Helen. "Did you think I was? He only took me to keep in his family. It was very kind in him to take care of me as long as he did."

"I know that," answered Jane; "but he adopted you, and you 've got his name, and I should n't think he 'd want you out to service."

"He did not tell me to work out. It was my own choice."

"I guess I'd a-staid with him as long as he 'd let me, and you 'll think so after you 've tried it as long as I have," said Jane.

"I think not, "said Helen. "But Jane, won't you tell me what the things you referred to this morning were, which you said made you angry? I mean only those which concerned me, of course."

"I don't know as it will do any good," was the reply; "and perhaps I 'd better keep still."

"Just as you think best," answered Helen; "I did n't know but it was something that I could explain, and I did not like to have you feel unpleasantly on my account."

"Well, I suppose I may as well out with it. It won't make any difference to me, I shall go away so soon."

"Do not tell it," remonstrated Helen, "if you ought not."

"It 's nobody's business but yours and mine," said Jane; "and I only thought it might make you mad at me, that's all; but I don't care, I 'll tell."

"I never get mad, Jane," said Helen, "and if I did, it would n't be toward those who are as kind to me as you have been."

"Well, to make it short," said Jane, "I was mad because I thought you wer n't no better than me, and I had to wait on you. Let me tell you 'twas dreadful gallin'. And then every time I went into Mrs. White's room I had to hear something said about what a smart girl you was, and how different from common ones. I say 'twould made you mad, and you could n't help it. I know I talked real mean to you this morning, and I cut the meat big on purpose, but I could n't help it. Now that 's just all of it."

"I am glad if that 's all," said Helen. "I was afraid I had done something to displease you, though I knew if I had, it was perfectly unintentional."

"Mrs. White was talking last night about your reading so much, as if any body could n't read when they 'd nothing on earth else to do? and she seemed to think you was very smart; but here, last winter, I knit two pair of fine stockings and read Robinson Crusoe besides, and all in the evenings, after work, too, and she don't seem to count that any thing."

"Perhaps you don't know how much she thinks of you," said Helen. "She has told me she considered you a very excellent girl, and was sorry to lose you."

"Well, nobody ever told me so before; and I did n't know it if she does."

"In regard to waiting upon me," continued Helen, "I was very sorry to trouble you; I knew you had

enough to do before I came, and I have felt very badly because I was n't able to help myself."

"I thought you did n't seem to care very much," replied the other; "you took it wonderfully cool, at any rate."

"Certainly, I tried not to murmur; I think it very wicked to murmur at the dispensations of Providence; we must be willing to suffer the will of God, and that cheerfully," said Helen.

"You are good, too, I see," responded Jane; "when Mrs. White finds that out, I don't know what she 'll do. The only thing she thinks is wrong about Mr. White is that he ain't good; she tries to make him, but he tells her she 's good enough for both of them, and there is no use in his being any better."

"I hardly thought he was a Christian," said Helen.

"I guess he ain't," continued Jane, "he won't even go to meetin' Sundays, because his wife can't. And when she tries to make him, he tells her he had rather stay and see *her* than all the people who go to church. He 's a real pleasant man, though. I like to have him around home; he 'll always let you do just as you want to, and give you money and such things. And there 's Will is just like him, he 's a real good boy; you 'll like him first-rate when you know him as well as I do. But Minnie ain't so, a bit; she 's like her mamma; she 's real good, but she don't make as much fun as they do."

"She is n't very quiet, I think," said Helen; "she seems very lively."

"O, yes, she makes noise enough, but she don't carry on as her papa and Will do."

After this first visit to Helen's room, Jane felt very differently toward her, and all necessary services were performed with perfect cheerfulness. She had before cherished a feeling which had made it impossible, as

she had declared, to treat her even with civility. And there is no feeling which can take possession of the human breast that will more effectually deprive it of happiness, and more certainly render those toward whom it is entertained odious, than jealousy. It is indeed

"The green-eyed monster which doth make
The meat it feeds on."

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was a moonlight evening in the late fall, a few fleecy clouds hung motionless in the clear cold air, and the moon in her full beauty sailed, a silvery sphere, high in the blue depths of heaven. Here and there a bright star opened its full eye upon the earth, which seemed to have shrouded itself in a dusky vail, as if loth to meet their piercing gaze.

Earth hath dark spots which it may blush to own. Life, in this world, hath an upper and a lower nature. It bears a visible and an almost hidden form. The busy, bustling, happy face which it presents to the careless eye, is but the lighter portion which floats upon the surface in the ocean of its realities. It hath deep joys and woes which can not mingle with the pomp, the pride, the vanity and fashion of its visible nature.

The long shadow of the palace rests upon many a humble dwelling which finds no place upon the map of life. The beating of the heart of earth's most honored son is echoed by the throbbing of hearts to which the world lendeth no ear. The wind that bears onward the joyous shout whispers many a low and lonely moan. This is no dreamy vision. There are children's hearts, broken by sorrow—young forms, bent with care—mothers, who answer with tears their infants' smiles—fathers, forgetful of that reverend name—and old age repining over the length of its remaining days. There are shoeless feet to track the snow-clad earth—bared limbs to meet the driving storm—mouths, eager

to catch the falling crumbs, and longing souls to feed on ignorance.

It was on one of those nights when the eye can seem to pierce through the clear blue dome above, and almost to gaze into the very heavens, that Helen sat stretching her sight far in that direction. It was at the close of the first day upon which she had performed all the duties of her new station, and she had retired to her chamber not a little wearied with these exertions. But it was no time for rest. Her poetic nature could not sleep when such a fountain of beauty was opened before her. She had seated herself by the window to gaze at those beauties, and the whole soul of thought was wide awake within. She had just begun to live for herself. She had now loosened herself from the arms of charity in which she had so long been folded, and for a second time looked back over the life she had led, and the remembrance of past sorrow awoke reflections like these: "Why am I so lonely in this wide world? Once there were those to whom I was as dear as life, then why were they so soon taken from me? and why, O why is my recollection of them so faint? I know that I once had an able and loving father, for I learned that from my mother. I can just remember how that mother loved me; but she lived borne down by misery and want, and sank into her grave uncertain of what would be the fate of her child. It would be sweet to weep by her grave, but *hers* is an unknown grave, which none linger to notice, and she who alone could love it, knows not where it is. True, I have one relative, a sister, but in all probability she is as lonely and as unhappy as I. Perhaps she is less fortunate than myself. When I left her she was weeping; she was too young to remember me, and I bear another name. Should we meet now we should

not recognize each other; but, O! how rich in joy would such a recognition be; how sweet to feel, after these years of loneliness, that I shared a sister's love! How sweet to lavish upon her the affections which must now be choked within my breast!"

This was unlike Helen, and just as she was about yielding to despair, the consciousness of what she was doing flashed across her mind, and she strove to banish all such murmuring thoughts. But her efforts were vain; she was unfitted to turn to the brighter side of her life, to reflect upon the blessings which she there enjoyed, and she opened her Bible, and read to divert her thoughts. She chanced to turn to the one hundred and twenty-first Psalm, and read, hardly conscious of what she was reading, until she came to these words,

"Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

"The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forever more."

The flame of that holy faith which had, long ago, been kindled in her breast, but which had for a moment, seemed to die out, then burned with a new brightness, and the calm which its light ever sheds over the spirit, rested upon her, and she sank sweetly to repose.

In the morning she awoke much refreshed, and began her duties with a new zeal. The sad reflections of the evening before only rendered the view of her present enjoyments and blessings more perfect. After Mrs. White had taken her breakfast, and Helen had arranged her room, she inquired what further she could do.

"You may read to me a little while," said Mrs. White. "I should like to hear a chapter from the

Bible;" and she asked, "Do you love to read the Bible, Helen?"

"Very much," said Helen; "and sometimes it is the only thing I care for; and last night it did me so much good."

"Why, Helen!" asked the other, "what good did it do you?"

Helen saw that she had, unintentionally, introduced a matter which she would much rather have concealed, but she could not refuse to answer Mrs. White's question, and said, "O, I felt rather sadly, and the chapter I read was very comforting."

"What made you sad?" again asked the other.

"Nothing," said Helen, "except my thoughts. I sat down by the window to look out, last evening; every thing was so beautiful; and I thought of things which made me unhappy for a while."

"And can you not tell me what you were thinking about," said Mrs. White, a little anxious to learn more of the character of Helen.

"Yes, ma'am, if you would like to hear; but it will not be very pleasant, I think."

"I should, if you are willing to tell me."

"I was thinking," said Helen, hesitatingly, "how lonely and poor I am, and I felt like complaining because I was not in different circumstances; but I only thought so a little while; as soon as I remembered how wrong I was, I stopped."

"And did you go to your Bible for comfort?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you found it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Who taught you to do so, Helen?"

"I imagine my mother did," said Helen. "I remember she used to read it to me."

"Then you can remember your mother?"

"Only a little; not very distinctly; but I recollect she used to teach me to pray."

"And have you been in the habit of praying ever since?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Helen; but the sad thoughts of the evening were again forced upon her, and she could say no more, but buried her face in her hands.

Mrs. White would gladly have asked her many more questions, but she would not willingly occasion sorrow, and she strove to speak comfort and draw consolation from that precious Word where she had learned that Helen was accustomed to seek it.

As soon as Helen had succeeded in overcoming, in a measure, her emotions, she began to read the chapter which Mrs. White had selected; but her voice faltered, and she was pleased when the entrance of Doctor Duval released her from her task. After a moment's conversation with Mrs. White, the doctor turned to Helen, whom he had not met in a number of days, and inquired if her arm felt strong now; and coming to her, he examined the injured portion.

Helen's eyes were swollen, and she would gladly have escaped his notice. Mrs. White saw her agitation, and said,

"You may leave the room, if you choose, and I will ring when I need you."

"I thank you," she replied, and went out.

"Doctor," said Mrs. White, after she had gone, "I have found a treasure in that girl. Every day I find more to admire; but she has not the least idea of her own worth, and makes no effort to display her virtues. I have this morning found that she is a humble, practical Christian, though she makes no profession of religion."

"That is the right kind of Christianity," responded the doctor; "the kind which is calculated to bless the world. That girl will do good wherever she is; she will do you good. With all your superior knowledge, you can not help but learn lessons of importance from her. I have seen it long ago; and I know the lessons of submission which *I* have learned from her will make me a better man. Why in the world she was n't born in circumstances to exert a wider influence, I can not see."

"Doctor, she would not murmur at that; you must learn a lesson from her there."

"It is my impulsive nature," he replied; "but God gave me this disposition, and it is not in my power to overcome it."

"He who gave it you has promised to aid you," said Mrs. White, rather reprovingly. "But to come back to Helen: she might never be what she is had she lived in prosperity. Perhaps her manner of life has been the means which her Creator has taken to make her thus humble."

"May be," said the other; "but He has given you and me the means to put her where her influence might be felt in a much wider sphere than it now is; and I believe He will hold us responsible for our neglect in this matter; we shall be punished for it, I am confident; there are not two ways about it. We may not sin with impunity."

"But, doctor, I thought you did not believe in a future state of misery?"

"But I believe we shall be punished for our sins, and I am enduring my punishment every day for my neglect in this very matter. I suffer more *real* pain from the conscience within me than could be inflicted corporeally."

"Why, then, do you not do as you think you ought," asked Mrs. White, "if you have both the means and the inclination?"

"Because," said the doctor "*right* is made to yield to *custom* in these days."

"Why, doctor!" exclaimed the other, "I thought you made it your boast that you were not influenced by custom."

"I *am not* as much as other people are; but we are all its slaves, more or less."

"What do you think *I* ought to do for Helen?"

"You have a conscience of your own," he answered.

"I have offered her all her time, except what I absolutely need of it, for study; and Miss Jenks will assist her when she may require assistance; so that I am sure she will be able to secure a tolerably good education if she remains with me any length of time."

"So far, good," said the doctor; "but I want to see her in some situation besides that of servant."

"I don't think she would be willing now to be taken into any family, as a child, if one should make her the offer."

"No; she is too noble-spirited for that."

"And she certainly is not competent to teach any thing more than a very common school; and she would much better be a pupil than a teacher, at present, at least."

"I know it," said the doctor, rather impatiently; "but it is none of those places that I want her to occupy."

"Well, what is it, doctor? Let me know, and if it is advisable, I will do all I can toward advancing your wishes."

"I can't *tell*," he replied, with a kind of nervous twitch, "but I can *feel* it all. O, I am sick of life! I

rejoice that there are but a few short years for me before the skies," he continued; "and then I shall meet with a spirit pure as hers, where no sorrow, poverty, pain, or sin, can interfere."

"Doctor, what do you mean?" said Mrs. White, greatly surprised at his remark. "Are you insane?"

"No; but I wonder I am not! I have had enough to make me so! Insanity would be bliss compared with what I now endure; but I am doomed to live and suffer, while my reason is the instrument of my suffering. That pure and lovely being who has just gone out of this room, is another of the instruments employed to torture me! I can not look at her in peace!"

"You need never see her again, doctor," said Mrs. White.

"I can not live without seeing her," he replied. "I must see her often, and yet I am wretched in her presence."

"Doctor," said Mrs. White, calmly, "you are talking very strangely, yet frankly, to me. Now let me ask you plainly, Do you love Helen?"

"No!" he answered decidedly.

"Then will you not tell me why you talk as you do of her? I think, perhaps, I ought to know the reason of all this, to regulate my conduct toward you both judiciously."

"You shall know; but it has never before passed the door of my lips. I am called a man incapable of loving, possessed of a harsh, unpleasant disposition, but it is false; I have a heart to love, and I have loved, and Helen is just like the one I have loved, so kind, so gentle, so pure."

"And was not that love reciprocated?"

"I know it was! with the whole heart she loved me."

"And why were you not united then? If both loved so earnestly and truly, you would certainly have been happy together. Would she not consent, or did her friends interfere?"

"She died!" he exclaimed, wildly, and began pacing the room, his arms folded, and his head bowed in sadness.

In this manner he walked a long time in silence, except a frequent heaving of deep, heavy sighs. Mrs. White did not feel inclined to speak to him, but she looked on him with a look of deep pity. She was sure she had learned the secret of his breast, and much in his manner that had previously appeared very strange, she could now easily understand. He, however, at length broke the silence by a kind of soliloquy.

"Yes, she died! and she is now with the angels and the pure spirits above, as pure as they, while I am left lonely and unloved upon earth;" and again he walked in silence.

After a moment Mrs. White remarked, "But there are others who might love you as ardently as she did. Perhaps you would be happier if you should transfer your love from her to another."

"There is but little pure love now. Interest overrules it, and I can not love those devotees of fashion who can smile on all they meet. No! my treasure and my love are both above, and I long for the day when I can go where they are."

"Doctor," said Mrs. White, "I am glad that you have told me this. Your conduct has troubled me. You have manifested an uncommon degree of interest in Helen. It was so evident that I could not fail to see it, and I feared you loved her. I have thought of cautioning her, but she is so unsuspecting that I concluded not to do so."

"Why," asked the other, "do you say you were

afraid I loved her? Would you consider it wrong for me both to love her and win her love in return if I chose?"

"I consulted *her* good in the matter," said Mrs. White.

"Would not her situation be bettered?" replied the doctor.

"It is better for her to improve her mind now, and she would be likely to neglect it were it thus."

"Never fear, Mrs. White; I agree with you. I never thought otherwise of her. I never expect to marry. I have vowed I will not. It was sympathy which prompted all my attention to Helen. I thought, as I noticed her kind and gentle disposition, how it was crushed and thwarted, and I know how keenly such natures feel this." And again he seemed to be lost in reflection, and it was evident what kind of thoughts engaged his attention, for his manner was always a perfect mirror of his thoughts.

Doctor Duval had long been an intimate friend of Mr. and Mrs. White, and by them his acquaintance and friendship were highly valued. Kind and generous, he had won their affections; an earnest advocate of *right*, he had gained their respect; and ever faithful and just, had secured their confidence. Still a vail of mystery hung over his conduct which they were unable to penetrate.

Dark thoughts seemed ever to haunt Doctor Duval while he was surrounded by every thing which should serve to banish sadness, and to his friends this was inexplicable. Mrs. White was confident that she had, at last, learned the reason of all this, and her pity excited a still deeper interest and regard for him. But human sight is short when it essays to pierce the deep recesses of the heart.

CHAPTER XXV.

The holidays were gone. Will and Minnie had passed a delightful winter, for they had enjoyed all the pleasure which wealth and kind friends could provide for them. The Christmas sleigh-ride and the New Year's gift had not been forgotten; each had received its share of attention, and the brother and sister had now entered upon the more sober part of the season. They were too young to mingle in the company of the young ladies and gentlemen, and their visits and amusements were always under the direction of their parents. Will, however, attended dancing-school, and had once or twice been present at "the public," or at a select cotillion party, and had, in this way, gained an acknowledged admittance into society. He was handsome and attractive, and ladies of maturer years than he could boast, courted his attention. He was tall, erect, and graceful, a most acceptable partner in the dance, and of an age when such amusements are the most fascinating. His father delighted to encourage his fancy for these things, as he was not unlike him in character and taste.

On a clear, cold evening, in the last of January, Mr. White was sitting at tea chatting with an old acquaintance who was paying him a visit. He was wholly regardless how rapidly time was slipping away, and unconscious of Will's uneasiness, who was reluctant to commit so great rudeness as to leave the table before his father and the guest.

But time sped on, and as it was getting very late for Will to accomplish what he wished, he said, very politely; "Father, I have an engagement this evening; will you please to excuse me?"

Will hoped by this remark to draw the two from the table; but his father only answered,

"Certainly, certainly, my son. I recollect you are to make your *début* to-night, you can be excused." Then, turning to his friend, he continued, "Will is getting along very rapidly in life; he is as much of a gentleman at fifteen as I thought of being at twenty-five."

Will had left the tea-room, but his wish was not accomplished, and after a moment's absence he returned and said,

"Father, I am sorry to interrupt you, but I should like to see you one moment in the hall."

"O, I understand," answered his father, without rising. "I've been a young gentleman in my life; you need white kid gloves and slippers. Yes, Will, tell John to get them for you."

"No, father, I thank you, I have attended to those things. I wish to speak of another matter."

"Excuse me, then," said Mr. White, addressing his friend; "step into the parlor and take an easy-chair, and I will be with you shortly."

A moment after Mr. White went into the hall, Will's quick step was heard bounding up the stairs, and the father returned to entertain his visitor.

"How soon boys learn to be beaux," said Mr. White, laughingly, when he entered the parlor. "Will has invited a young lady to accompany him to the party to-night, and he wants John and the coach at his service for the evening. Wife has some compunctions of conscience about his age, but I tell her he will never

be young but once, and we must let him enjoy himself as best he can."

"True, true," said his friend; "but there is a great difference in boys. I have a nephew—Harry Lee—staying with me who is just sixteen, and he seems to care little for society."

"I don't dislike to see a boy lively, and fond of amusement," replied Mr. White. "On the contrary, I think it preferable that they should be so."

"To a certain extent," responded the other. "Harry is by no means dull, but he loves his book, and seems to have a just estimation of the value of an education. He has a mind such as you rarely find in a boy of his age. He is a deep thinker, and will make something yet, I 'm certain."

"Will is n't troubled in that way at all," said his father. "I never expect he will be President of the United States, or any thing approaching it; but I am confident he will make a pretty fair business man."

"Well, Harry is an uncommonly intelligent boy; he is bright and cheerful when in company, but he does not neglect his studies to participate in the amusements of the young. He has, even now, the whole plan of his future course in life mapped out, and it has been done with remarkable prudence and judgment."

"Will is very different there; he will take the world as it comes along. I shall start him in some profitable business when the right time comes, and I have no doubt he will succeed well."

"No doubt of it. I only spoke of the difference in boys."

"I understand—I understand," said Mr. White; "but what does Harry design to do in the line of business? He will make a professional man, I suppose."

"Yes, he contemplates the study of medicine or

the law; at present he evinces a preference for the former."

"Unwise, I think, very," said Mr. White. "He won't find it so easy to ride to fame on a pill-box. I should prefer the law."

"I have never heard him speak of fame. I only gave it as my opinion that he would make a strong-minded and noble man. I don't think he would have a desire for common political fame, or any thing of that nature."

"I sometimes wish Will was inclined a little more to study," said Mr. White; "but he appears so happy that I don't know that it would make much difference. If he is contented I may as well be satisfied. But I mean to put him through college, at any rate."

The party which Will was preparing to attend was the one Louise Doxtater had styled her "come out," which, as she told Miss Hapwood, she was to make on her sixteenth birth-day. She, indeed, made a brilliant entrée into society, if this party was her introduction. In the selection of her guests she had disregarded age entirely. All whom she deemed worthy of her notice, from the Master and Miss of fourteen, to Doctor Duval, and even his seniors, were invited. When the company had assembled, the richly furnished parlors presented a scene of beauty, elegance, and gayety, far surpassing any thing that is seen in the ordinary walks of life. Soft eyes were lighted with an unnatural brightness, and cheeks painted with a becoming glow by excitement, and beauty then appeared more beautiful than ever.

Not unnoticed in the crowd at the party, was Will White, and a lovely girl who was leaning upon his arm, and whose manifest delight and interest in all that passed, showed that she was unaccustomed to such

scenes. In the gay circles they were the gayest; of all the voices which on that evening blended with the tones of the piano, hers was the sweetest, and where the dance was liveliest this was the gayest couple. Louise was perfectly happy. She had bidden "adieu" to school and books, and had entered the ranks of fashion, which she had learned to consider the chief end of her existence. She moved among the company, and greeted each of her guests with an expression of delight which could not fail to excite in them a corresponding cheerfulness.

It was near ten o'clock. Louise had taken Will's second arm, and he, whose gallantry was not insufficient for two ladies, was playing the agreeable most successfully, when they observed the elder Miss Hapwood, standing, apparently unattended, near one of the windows.

"I do wish nature had been more bountiful," said Will, approaching her, "and given me three arms instead of two; I should be most happy to offer you the third."

"I thank you," she replied, cheerfully; "but I think you have quite as many ladies under your charge now as you can well take care of."

"O, no," he answered, "I could take half-a-dozen more just as well as not."

"So he could," said Louise; "you have no idea what a fine beau he is."

"There, Miss Hapwood," continued Will, "I suppose you will not think of doubting a lady's word?"

"Certainly not," said she; "and I believe I shall join in your regret that nature did not bless you with three arms."

"But where is *your* beau?" exclaimed Louise, as if recollecting something. "I invited Doctor Duval on

purpose for you. Isn't he here? He hasn't sent a regret. He won't be so impolite as to neglect my invitation entirely, I hope."

"He will be here, yet," said Will. "I heard him tell father he should come up a few moments."

"A few moments!" repeated Louise; "what's the reason he can't stay as other people do?"

"O, you know he isn't fond of attending parties; I think it strange he is coming at all," said Will.

"He is just as odd as a fish," remarked Louise, "I don't like him at all."

"Be careful, miss, how you speak of my beau," interrupted Miss Hapwood; "I may resent it."

"Excuse me, do, Miss Julia! I entirely forgot myself. I think him the most graceful, kind, and fascinating gentleman I ever met."

"Come, come," said Will, "I can't allow this. You must n't say any thing of that kind about my friend, the doctor, he is a fine fellow. But how is it, Miss Hapwood, is he a beau of yours? I feel it my duty to keep a watch over him, and I shall take him to task if he has given his heart away without asking my permission."

"You need not be troubled," replied Miss Hapwood, making an effort to appear agitated; "this is a matter between Louise and me alone."

"That will do so long as he is not engaged in it," said the other; "but you must be careful what designs you have upon him. However, I will do all I can for you in that direction; my influence over him is great, I assure you."

"I thank you," she replied, "but I will not trouble you. I have no opinion of matches unless they are made in heaven."

"It is pretty certain you will be obliged to wait some time, then, as the doctor's health is very good,"

said Will; "but I believe, according to Scripture, they don't marry up there."

"You wicked fellow!" exclaimed Miss Hapwood.

"That is not wicked, I'm sure," said the lad; "but there's the doctor, now, coming to find you, Louise."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Miss Hapwood. "I'm afraid he heard what we were talking about."

"Good evening, Doctor Duval," said Louise, letting go Will's arm. "I am happy to see you. I was afraid you were going to neglect me entirely."

"O, by no means," he replied; "on the contrary, I have paid you marked attention by accepting your invitation. I seldom attend parties."

"What's the reason? pray tell. Is it because you dislike the ladies so much?"

"O, no, but I do not like to disturb the happiness of others by my presence."

"If that is so, you ought to have heard how we were just mourning your absence."

"Can it be? You must have been laboring under aberration of mind."

"We were never more sane in our lives. Will has even been reproaching nature for not having given him three arms, so that he might take care of your lady for you."

"My lady?" said the doctor.

"Yes, your lady;" and turning to Miss Hapwood, who had been an attentive listener, she continued, "I know I should not have introduced the matter so publicly, but I trust to your generosity to excuse me."

The doctor's countenance darkened. But recollecting himself, he assumed a cheerful air, and remarked that he regretted if this was the case; he would be more prompt in future; and offered to make any atonement which the ladies might consider necessary.

"You can atone in no other way than by offering her your arm, and being most attentive the remainder of the evening."

"Will you take my arm, then?" he said, bowing to Miss Hapwood.

She readily accepted it; and bidding the trio good-by, they moved away among the crowd.

"Haven't I done it?" said Louise, triumphantly. "I told her I would."

"Yes, you have," replied Will; "and I hope you will be as successful for yourself—I mean I *know* you will be as successful for yourself. Excuse my mistake."

"Come, sir! no insinuations; but see how happy my couple look. I think the doctor makes a fine beau. What does make him appear so oddly at times?"

"O, you don't know him! When you are as well acquainted with him as I am, you will understand him better."

Miss Hapwood entertained the doctor nearly an hour, and was becoming quite delighted with his attentions, when he said, rather bluntly,

"I must beg to be excused, Miss Hapwood. I would like to find Miss Doxtater, and say 'Good-evening' before I go;" and without giving her time to reply, he left her.

Louise was surprised when he told her his intention to leave, and asked, "What have you done with Miss Hapwood?"

"I excused myself," he answered.

"And before you have taken any refreshments?"

"I don't care for any. Good-evening," he said, and was gone.

"Provoking fellow!" exclaimed Louise. "But let us go and find Miss Hapwood."

She was standing in a kind of perplexed study, just

where she had been left, when they approached her, and did not observe them until Louise spoke, "Isn't that one way to be gallant?"

"It 's a way I don't fancy."

"Nor I, either; but it is just like him. I believe I 'd let him go if I were you, Miss Hapwood. I should n't fancy *him* any better than I do his ways," continued Louise.

"He goes, whether I let him or not," replied Miss Hapwood.

"Now I can explain all this at once," interrupted Will. "The doctor was so overcome with your agreeable society, he could not endure it another moment. He will do what is right, I am confident, one of these days."

"Maybe," said Louise; "and I think I will follow his example, and excuse myself, Mr. Will. I'll make it all right, one of these days; just now I must attend to the rest of my company. I must flirt awhile with Monsieur Boutillier. Don't you see he is left in a kind of French solitude? Meanwhile, I will put you under Will's care, Miss Hapwood; and we will see if he is any more trusty than his friend."

"What a precious trust I have!" said Will, offering his arm to Miss Hapwood.

"I am glad if you realize it," she replied.

"O, I do, fully." Then turning to the young girl at his side, who had been so long silent, he said, "Come, Franky, what is the matter with you? You must wake up and say something, or I shall have to take you to the asylum for mutes. Why don't you let us hear your charming voice?"

"I presume it is owing to my ignorance," she replied. "I am like a freshman in such a place as this, and have n't learned much small-talk yet."

"Do you mean to call what we say, small-talk?"

"Certainly I do; and I have been learning to carry a part. I consider this a very fine opportunity for me."

"Let me tell you," said Will, lengthening his face, "these matters which have engaged our attention are of vital importance; you will see things in their true light hereafter."

"When all things are done right, I suppose," she answered; and continued, "You see I am quite an apt scholar."

Just here the voice of Mr. Doxtater was heard, requesting the guests to repair to the east and west wings of the house, for refreshments. Miss Hapwood was quite at ease with her new escort, and complimented him highly upon his gallantry. He was careful that the ladies should receive a portion of every delicacy, and was particularly careful that each should have a good supply of mottoes; and with those missives he made many startling declarations of affection. "Here is one," he said, "for you, Franky; just the thing; I could not have expressed my own feelings as well had I studied a week on the subject."

She took it, and read thus:

"I wish you were a mouse,
And I a cat to watch ye,
I'd chase ye all about the house,
You little mischief, till I'd catch ye."

"And, fortunately, I have just the answer for you," said she, gayly, offering him a paper she had been holding some minutes:

"The motto I received from thee
Is candied o'er with flattery."

"Tell me," said Will, "you are ignorant on these subjects! I believe you are a natural flirt, trifling with

my feelings in this kind of style. I expected something very sweet and overcoming from you. Ah, Miss Franky! you are beginning altogether too young to break hearts. I imagine you design to make a wholesale business of it."

Twice John came with the coach, and twice was ordered at a later hour; and when, at last, Will was ready to leave, the gray light of morning was shed over the city.

"'T is mighty tedious," said John, after Franky had been left at her home, "to be watchin' the hours, and comin' out in so cold an evenin' as this."

"You don't mean to complain, do you, John? why I expect you to do it often for me. This is only the first time. But here 's a half-dollar, which I think will square all accounts."

"No nade of that, at all, sir!" replied John—careful, however, that the coin was safely lodged in his pocket before he made the remark. "I was only thinkin' ye 'd better fix upon the hour it shall be, another time, to be more sparin' of the hosses. They are a fine span, and yer father does n't like them taxed too grately."

"And you got a little lonesome and sleepy, I guess, John."

"Not in the laste. Helen set me some strong tay on the stove, and gave me a grate chair and piller, so I was as easy as ye could wish; but, since ye 're home, I 'll be takin' to the bed I 'm thinkin'."

"Money will do almost any thing for you, won't it, John?" said Will, who understood the Irishman's weakness well.

"Ah, indade, and it will," he answered. "Sure, the world 's poor without the money."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THREE years had passed away. Mrs. White's disease had yielded, in a great measure, to medical treatment; and she was able to move, with little difficulty, in the midst of her family. Helen was still with them. Her kindness and true worth were fully appreciated by them, and they had learned to love her as a child and sister. She had been Minnie's assistant in her studies, and many an approving smile had been bestowed upon her pupil, by Miss Jenks, for the accomplishment of difficult tasks which, without Helen's aid, had remained unlearned.

To Helen the world had grown brighter, and life dearer. She lived independently, and was conscious that she had secured the love of those whose friendship was better than riches. Her sadness had given place to cheerfulness, though the gayety which is the usual companion of her years, was wanting. Minnie had grown, but the artlessness which characterized her when a child was the greatest charm of her girlhood. She was like a sunbeam in the midst of her home, whose light shed happiness into every heart.

Mr. White had concluded to spend the coming summer in the country, and, early in the spring, their country-seat was repaired for their reception. The dust of years was to be brushed away, and the house thoroughly ventilated before it could be occupied. Betty and John were several days in accomplishing this, and when, at last, the family came from the city,

the pride of the faithful servants, on account of their success, was clearly manifested. Betty led Mrs. White and Helen through the kitchen and wash-room, calling their attention to every trifling convenience, and expressing unbounded delight at the increased extent of her premises. All the tin and copper utensils, with the great copper pump, which stood just within the kitchen-door, were bright as polished mirrors.

"Ye 'll never be lavin' this, I 'm sure," she said to Mrs. White; "it 's so delightful to see the green trees and hear the robins sing. Sure, the city 's no place to be stayin' in." And in Betty's joy did Mrs. White truly participate. She could feel new strength invigorating her frame with every breath of air she inhaled.

"I like it all well," continued Betty, "barrin' the stone men and women in the garden; at night they 're so like the ghosts I used to hear ob in the ould counthry. I wound the one yonder with a blanket, the second night afther I come, for it stood lookin' straight at me when I tried to slape, and the light o' the moon made it life itself, and it scared the wits out o' me, for every time I opened me eyes I thought, shure, 'twas a-movin'."

Marks of neglect were everywhere visible about the grounds; the weeds had grown over the edges of the walks, and there was hardly a trace of the flower-beds left. To arrange these properly afforded employment both pleasant and useful to Helen. She directed John about cutting a smooth edge to the walks, and watched him lest his clumsy spade should cut beyond the line she had drawn. She taught him to roll the gravel so that the hollows which had been washed out by the heavy rains should be filled, and the drifted piles of stone removed. She taught him to prune the trees, and

selected the branches which were to be cut, in order that each might grow thriftily and well-proportioned.

A long line of currant-bushes were growing against the side fence of the garden. These bushes had become perfectly rank, and were wasting all their strength in leaves. When Helen had instructed him how to remedy this, and was certain he needed no further help from her, she left him, and went to attend to her duties in the house. Once or twice she came to the door and spoke an encouraging word, for she well knew how much this would lighten John's task, and she was never forgetful to do a kindness, and John truly merited encouragement. Suddenly she heard him screaming, as if in great distress, and running out, saw him surrounded by hornets. He was striking at them with all his might, but the battle was not to the strong, and the little winged army had all the advantage.

"Come away, John! come away!" cried Helen, and John threw himself upon the grass, rolling and screaming in agony.

Helen did not wait a moment, but ran to the brook and filling her hand with soft black mud, came to his assistance. The hornets were flying angrily about their nest, and she drew him away from the bushes, and then covered his face and hands with the mud, while he kept up a constant screaming.

"O, me face is ruined! The ba'as have killed me, intirely! O, me hands! me hands! I'm dyin' with the smart! I'm stung! I'm stung! Blame the ba'as!"

Helen's remedy proved effectual, and in less than an hour he was quietly sitting in the kitchen.

John had changed his clothes after this adventure, and his vengeance was partially satisfied by the killing of the little creatures which had crawled into his sleeves. It was laughable to see him covered with mud, and

listen to his account of the engagement. His zeal about trimming the row alone had abated, and he expressed his conviction that it would be "safer not to meddle in them parts."

At evening, when the hornets were all gathered in the nest, Helen filled a large dipper with water, and told John to take his pruning-knife and follow her. When he saw that she was going directly toward the dreaded nest, he remonstrated loudly.

"Sure, Miss Helen, they can sting in the dark; ye'll be betther out of this. Ye can't drown them, at all, at all."

Helen bade John be quiet, and going cautiously to the nest, she placed the water under the opening near the bottom, so that the hornets could not escape, and ordered John to cut the bush upon which it was fastened, close to the root. When he saw how they were secured, he obeyed cheerfully, for he was anxious to see them destroyed. But Helen took the bush and carried it—careful to keep the water under the opening—to a thicket of low bushes in an adjoining field, and there left the nest unharmed.

John went willingly to his work the next morning, but he was ever after careful, when trimming currant-bushes, to keep an eye out for the hornets.

The second Sabbath morning after their removal to the country, Helen arose very early, and wandered in the grove before the house. There is a sacredness about the Sabbath in the country which is never felt in the thickly-peopled city. A sweet and holy quiet appears to pervade all nature, and throughout her broad temple each breeze seems to whisper,

"The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the world keep silence before him."

The trees seem to wave more gently, and the birds

to sing more sweetly upon the Sabbath day than upon all the other six; and "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, all His works praise Him." Helen had learned this in former years, and she arose thus early that she might not lose a single hour of the precious time. Her heart beat in unison with nature, and she found sweet pleasure as each moment passed. The new-born leaves, with every blade of grass, breathed their Maker's praise; and when the bell of the neighboring church rung the hour of service, every farm-house poured forth a company of worshipers. The faithful horses, which had all the week been dragging the plow through the beaten earth, snuffed with delight at the lighter task of carrying their masters to the church. John put the horses before the carriage, and Helen, with Minnie and Will, joined those who had gathered there.

But little change had taken place in the country meeting-house since Helen was last in it, and she observed many a familiar face. There was the same little square desk for a pulpit, and the same high-backed pews. She noticed, particularly, the one where she sat the first Sunday she came there with Willie Burke; but all had been painted newly, in anticipation of the coming of a new minister. Helen, at first, regretted that the pastor, to whose teachings she had formerly listened, was gone; but she recollected how time had laid its hand heavily upon him, how his voice trembled when he assured his flock that his work was almost done; that, though he waited patiently his appointed time, he looked, with pleasure, to the day when he should join the company who are keeping the holier Sabbath on high; and she could but rejoice that he had, at last, reached the haven of his desires.

When the new pastor entered the pulpit every eye

was on him; but he went with an appearance of reverence, which told, plainly, that he was insensible to all save the all-seeing eye; and when he bowed his head in silent prayer, a spirit of supplication pervaded the whole assembly, and many a heart joined in the earnest entreaty, that this connection might be blessed to both pastor and people.

Mr. Ashton—for that was the new clergyman's name—had just finished his theological studies. He had been recommended to this church upon the death of their pastor, and on this Sabbath entered upon his new charge. There was an unusual solemnity in his manner, which none failed to observe. Perhaps it was caused by the peculiarity of the occasion; but if this were so, it proved to the people that *his* was a heart alive to its responsibilities, and fully awake to their importance.

The new pastor selected, as his text, Peter's inquiry of Cornelius—"I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me?" His sermon was an examination of the relations existing between pastor and people, the duties belonging, particularly, to his office, and the co-operation he might reasonably expect from them; and his words came with such power and deep meaning, that they reached the heart of every hearer. After service, they gathered around him, and each extending a friendly hand, offered him an earnest welcome, and returned to their homes, bearing with them the Heaven-sought blessing of their new and youthful pastor.

It is a very easy thing to win the heart. Kind words, and a friendly interest in another's welfare, are never-failing means of accomplishing this; and he who delights in being kind, who is kind in reality, is always rich in friends.

When Helen and the children returned, Mrs. White made many inquiries respecting the sermon, and Min-

nie was very ready to answer. She assured her mother that preaching never before sounded to her as it had that day; that the people appeared deeply interested in the services; and when they bowed their heads in prayer, they did not do it because they thought it was necessary on account of custom, but because they really prayed.

"Can you tell me what the minister's text was?" asked her mother.

"Yes, in one minute," answered Minnie, rubbing her head with her hand, as if to rouse her memory. "O, I know," she exclaimed, after a moment's thought, "it was, 'What was the reason you sent for me?'" But this did not sound quite right, and again she tried to recollect. Helen then opened her Bible at the passage and handed it to Minnie, who read it to her mother. Helen, however, seemed to have little or no inclination to talk, but remained quiet and thoughtful.

Mr. Ashton was the same gentleman who had called, with Louise and Jack Doxtater, at Mr. Burke's, and whom Louise had notified Miss Julia Hapwood she would probably find "a little verdant." His mother was a sister of Mrs. Doxtater, though very unlike her in character and taste. She died when her son was but a boy; but the influence of her precepts and holy example, together with her prayers, had kept him unspotted from the world. His father had long since lost his eyesight; and the property which he had accumulated in his more prosperous days, was barely sufficient for his own maintenance.

Mr. Ashton and an only sister were early dependant upon their own exertions for support, and his struggles in obtaining an education had been long and tedious. His visit to New York, several years before, had not been made to revive an intimacy which had then been

long broken off between kindred families; but, in the midst of his difficulties, he had ventured to ask the loan of a few hundred dollars from his uncle, who had enough and to spare, to enable him sooner to complete his studies. He felt confident that he should be able to refund the money long before it was needed, and offered to devote the first fruits of his labors to that purpose. But his uncle was older, and, in his own estimation, much wiser than his nephew; and, after impressing upon his young mind, the advantage of graduating, even at a later period, free from all pecuniary incumbrances, sent him away as empty as he had come.

Perhaps this disappointment was not without its good results to Mr. Ashton, but he could not divest himself of the belief that avarice had, in this instance, deprived the world of some benefits which he might have wrought, by more than a year of earnest efforts as a pastor. But the difficulties were now overcome, and he had entered upon the great mission of benevolence and love, which our Saviour left to his early followers.

Before the leaves of spring, at that time just bursting into life, had put on their autumnal hues, his sister became a teacher in the little school-house by the church (the same in which Helen had been instructed in her childhood), and they two, with their aged sire, lived in the cottage near by. It was pleasing to watch the expression of gratitude in that sister's face, as she listened to her brother's ministrations, and witnessed his success; and to see the tears gather in the father's sightless eyes, as the words of comfort and hope, uttered by his son, fell upon his ear. Although that father could not see, he knew by the holy quiet which surrounded him, that all the assembly were filled with the spirit which their pastor invoked heaven to shed down upon his beloved people.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Will ye be afther comin' into the kitchen, Helen? it 's meself that 'll not stay alone there another minute," exclaimed Betty, in a state of great excitement; "sure, she 's no wit at all, or she 'd not be spakin' such nonsense."

"Who—what is it Betty?" asked Helen, preparing to follow her.

"And is n't that same more than Betty can tell ye? grate things she 's sayin', all the time, of the light on the water, and it 's not a bit of a light I 've had since she came. What need of one had I in the day time, sure?"

"O, I know, it must be old Barbara," said Helen. "Poor creature, is she alive yet! she is a crazy woman, Betty, but she never does any harm."

"And did n't I know she was crazy as soon as ever I see the face of her," replied Betty. "But, and is n't it harm to be scarin' the wits out of me, too, I 'd like to know. Ye 'd better send her out of this directly."

Barbara rose and made a precise courtesy when Helen entered the kitchen, repeating the civility as Mrs. White and Minnie, who had overheard the conversation, appeared.

"How do you do, Barbara, and what have you been doing since I went away from here?" inquired Helen, pleasantly.

"Looking for the light in the grave-yard," replied the maniac; "but it has n't burned yet."

"Och, save us!" exclaimed Betty, making the sign of the cross upon her breast, and terrified at this strange answer.

"It is too late to save us now," replied Barbara, staring vacantly at Betty. "The light has gone out, clear out on the water."

"O, St. Mary! but forgive me if it 's swarin," again exclaimed Betty.

"Have you had any breakfast, Barbara?" inquired Helen.

"Yes, I eat as soon as the daylight comes. I never want for food, but the darkness is my trouble," and then, uttering a loud maniac laugh which drove Betty into the most remote corner of the room, old Barbara continued: "And your light went out on the water, Nellie Lincoln, but you have been coy of the rain, and, may be, it will shine outside of the grave-yard for you."

"You have told me this a great many times," replied Helen. "Won't you try and tell me what you mean, and what the light was?"

Barbara uttered another loud laugh, which revealed how perfectly the light of her reason had gone out, and answered,

"I thought you had forgotten it, but it was a great light, and it was dark when it went out, but it will burn for me soon, again, and I have come to tell you of it; the darkness is almost over now."

"What light, Barbara?" again asked Helen.

"The great light which you have forgotten," she replied.

"Barbara," interrupted Mrs. White, "where do you live?"

"In expectation of the light," answered the maniac.

"Do you suffer any?" again inquired the other.

"There is misery in the darkness, but it 's almost over now;" and the horrifying laugh of the crazy woman told how far hope and reason sometimes dwell apart.

"She talks very strangely," said Mrs. White, turning to Helen; "I do not understand her at all."

"Nor I," replied the other. "She has often told me these same things, and she seems to know something about me."

"Yes," interrupted Barbara. "I know how your light went out; and have n't you seen the darkness?"

"And what d' ye think ye 'll find out by that? ye 'd betther be lavin' her to herself, and not bother yer brains with the nonsense," said Betty, having gathered courage enough to leave the corner. "I 'll give her a bit if she wants it, and then let her be off."

"Let her stay as long as she chooses," replied Mrs. White; "you should pity her."

"And it 's meself 'll be afther needin' the pity, if ye lave her here much longer," remonstrated Betty.

"Blame the witch!" exclaimed John as he entered the kitchen and saw Barbara there. "Is n't it meself that 's bate now; three days the ould crature has been peekin' through the fence, and I bid her begone out of this entirely; shall I put her abroad, ma'am?"

"No, John, no; treat her kindly," said Mrs. White and Helen both at once; "she can do no hurt."

"Strange likin's ye have, if ye 're fond of that sort o' company," replied John; "sure, ye can get no maanin' out of her, but it 's a light—blame her nonsense—she talks of entirely;" and as she heard the word light, she uttered another horrible laugh.

"Murther!" exclaimed, John; "the voice of her 's destroyin'."

"Be coy of the storms, Nellie Lincoln," said Barbara, rising to leave; "be coy of the storms, for your light went out on the water."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

To Helen, every day of their stay in the country revived some recollection of former years. The fields, the woods, and the wild-flowers, were freighted with memories of the past. She rambled with Minnie over the places which she had known in her childhood, and told her of many and many an incident which then occurred. Together they sat by the side of Willie's grave, and Minnie's tears fell in sympathy with those which Helen shed. But sometimes Helen visited the place alone. She had often done so in the early morning, but the dew on the long grass made this imprudent, and she sought other opportunities.

One pleasant afternoon, in the early summer, when a company of Will's friends had come to spend a day with him, at his country home, and Minnie was enjoying their society, Helen stole quietly out of the back garden, and went to the grave of Willie.

She sat down upon the grass by the head-stone, unconscious that any person was near to see, or to disturb her. She had been there but a few minutes, however, when a rustling near by startled her, and looking in the direction from which the sound proceeded, she saw Mr. Ashton. He had been reading, just behind a large tree which stood near, and fearing lest his presence might be an intrusion, was making an effort to leave unobserved. Helen's apparent agitation offered a sufficient apology for speaking, and he said,

"Please, excuse me; I did not intend to be discovered."

"Rather excuse me for interrupting you," replied Helen; "I did not know that any other person ever came here."

"I often come," said he, "to read. I find this a most delightful place, and a much more inviting study than my low chamber in the house."

"It is, indeed, a lovely place, and particularly so to me, on the account of one I once loved, but I did not design to remain long, and I beg you will not let me disturb you. I shall leave immediately," said she, turning toward the entrance to the inclosure.

"By no means!" said Mr. Ashton. "The graves of our friends are spots sacredly our own, and I can not consent to your leaving until you have remained as long as you choose. I can come another time just as well."

"I thank you," said Helen.

"Allow me to inquire, will you?" continued Mr. Ashton, "if these are relatives of yours? I know them, the family of a Mr. Burke, who formerly owned the house where I board."

Helen hesitated a moment; her answer would naturally reveal much of her early misfortune, or, if evaded, excite Mr. Ashton's curiosity, and perhaps increase her embarrassment, and she answered frankly,

"No, sir! but I was brought to Mr. Burke's when a child, and I loved Willie as a brother."

Mr. Ashton was Helen's pastor, and with him she felt acquainted, and still he was a stranger. She had, however, a strong confidence in him. That this was so, her manner plainly indicated, and it was not surprising that Mr. Ashton, taking advantage of the opportunity, remarked,

"I have seen you at church, if I remember correctly, with the son and daughter of Mr. White."

"Yes, sir! I am living there now, and it is a very delightful home for me. I think I was more fortunate than people in my circumstances often are, in finding such a home."

Helen had made this last remark purposely to interest Mr. Ashton, for she longed to share his sympathy.

"Pardon me if I ask," said he, "since you have introduced the subject, what you mean by people in like circumstances with you?"

"I mean those who are left, as I was, very early in life, without parents, and without any means of support;" and she added, feelingly, "I was left so."

"But," said Mr. Ashton, "when earthly parents are taken away, we have still a Father in heaven, who has promised to be a Father to the fatherless. I trust you have found His promise true?" He paused a moment for a reply, but receiving none, he asked, "Have you not learned to call Him Father?"

"I have," said Helen; "and I have never been allowed to suffer since I can remember. I mean," she continued, "for the necessaries of life."

"And have you suffered in any way?" he asked.

"I have sometimes wished that I had some kind relative, but now, in Mrs. White's family I have all that I can desire."

"I know them to be wealthy, and able to gratify every wish, but often the good fortune of those around us serves to render the less fortunate unhappy. Does it not sometimes affect you in this way?" again he inquired.

"O, no!" said Helen, "I never wished for wealth; I only desire a true friend, and I know that I have more than one in that family. If you knew Mrs. White, you would value her friendship more than riches."

"Have I ever seen her?" asked Mr. Ashton.

"I think not," replied Helen, "She has been an invalid for years, and though she is much better now than formerly, she is not able to ride to church and sit during the service, and she seldom goes outside of the yard. I remember all I can of the sermon, and tell it to her after I get home."

"Perhaps she would not consider it out of place—since she resides at present in my parish—if I should call upon her?" said he, in an inquiring tone.

"I know she would not," replied Helen. "I have heard her express a wish that you would do so."

"I thank you," said Mr. Ashton, "but I did not design to interrupt you so long," and shaking Helen's hand, he left.

Helen entirely forgot the reflections in which she had come to indulge. The pressure of the hand she had just shaken seemed to have imparted a sensation to her own which did not leave it when the hand was removed, and the voice, with every word Mr. Ashton had uttered, seemed constantly sounding in her ears. Even after she reached home, they did not leave her, and when others spoke to her, it seemed like an interruption. The reason of this she could not discover, she only knew that she had felt much in the same manner when she came from church, after having listened to Mr. Ashton's sermon—she know not that—

> "Love at first is but a dreamy thing,
> That slyly nestles in the human heart."

She never thought of love, and would have denied the truth, though innocently, had she been questioned.

"Why, what is the matter with you, Helen!" said Minnie, after many useless efforts to engage her attention; "you won't talk at all."

"What is it? Nothing at all," answered Helen, a little confusedly, "I will hear you now."

"Why, I have been telling you a great many pleasant things which have happened this afternoon, and some very laughable ones too, and I don't believe you know any thing about them now," replied Minnie.

"And I shall join with Minnie in this complaint," said Mrs. White, cheerfully. "I never saw you appear so strangely."

"I did not know it," replied Helen.

"I don't think you know any thing that is going on," continued Minnie, "but you seem to be keeping up a wonderful thinking. Come, tell us what your thoughts are."

Helen slightly blushed and answered, "Nothing of any importance."

"I think they must be of considerable importance to change you so much," said Minnie, "and I am quite curious to know what they are."

Helen could not have been induced to reveal her thoughts. She would have blushed to own that an accidental interview with one who was as a stranger to her, had so much influenced her; and to satisfy Minnie, she said,

"I have been to the grave-yard; perhaps that has made me a little thoughtful."

"O, that is where you have been," said the other. "I have looked all over for you."

"Did you want me for any thing particular?" inquired Helen.

"Yes," said Minnie; "for something very particular, indeed. A gentleman from the city came to pay you a visit while you were gone."

"Pray, tell who called upon me from the city!" said Helen.

"When I think you are awakened enough to realize it, I shall tell you; but I will wait awhile; your anxiety to know will be a good thing to arouse you," said Minnie.

"I guess I can realize it now. I confess a little eagerness to know who it could be," replied Helen.

"It was Doctor Duval," said Minnie, laughing.

"What do you mean by telling me this, Minnie?"

"Just exactly what I said. Doctor Duval called to see you this afternoon."

"You are jesting, I 'm sure."

"Ask mother, then;" and Minnie turning to her mother, said, "Mother, is n't it so?"

"Your word, I think, will satisfy Helen," answered her mother.

"Certainly, certainly," said Helen; "but it was a thing so unexpected, I could hardly credit it at first; I thought Minnie must be joking."

This was, in reality, no very wonderful circumstance, for Mrs. White's family had long ago forgotten Helen in her capacity of servant; she had become as one of them; and though her discretion did not suffer her to take the least advantage of this in regard to associating with Mrs. White's friends, she often saw Doctor Duval, whose visits had been so frequent, and he had learned to look upon her as did the family.

"I think he was quite dissatisfied," said Minnie. "He appeared so; indeed, he was almost as absent-minded as yourself."

"Perhaps he wished to know if I had broken my arm again, since I am living in the country."

"No; he wanted to see you, not professionally; he really likes you, and I always knew it; he left his compliments for Miss Helen; and he wished me to say, that the next time he came he would like to have you let your whereabouts be known."

"I am very much obliged," said Helen.

"And are you not sorry that you were away? I expected to hear you express a great deal of regret."

Helen did not in the least regret that she had not seen Doctor Duval. Her dislike for him then seemed even stronger than ever, and she was rather pleased because she was absent when he came.

Just then, Will and his friends, who had been out for a stroll, came in. Will's eyes glistened as he entered the room; and the expression of his countenance, when he fixed them upon Helen, told her plainly that she might expect to be teased, before he had time to speak.

"These grave-yard flirtations with the new minister won't do, Helen," said he; and the remark attracted the attention of the whole company. "We shall have to be careful how we let you go about, alone, after this;" and turning to his mother, he inquired, "Mother, has she told you of this?"

Helen's face changed a dozen colors in a moment; but she knew the best way to take a joke was to join it, and she answered,

"Of course, I kept it entirely to myself, and I thought you was more my friend than to expose me in this way."

"The true friend looks at the permanent, and not at the momentary good," he continued; "but you did n't think I saw you all the time, did you?"

"No; I did not; and I hardly think you saw any thing very wonderful," she replied.

"No; I suppose not. It would n't be any thing very wonderful for you to flirt with a dominie; it is rather what might be expected," said he.

"Will, how you talk! I never flirt. All I said was said soberly and earnestly."

"Exactly! I thought you acted as if you were 'playing to keep;' but I did n't think you would be so willing to own it. Mother," he continued, turning to Mrs. White, "I must tell you how it was, and be off; I will settle with Helen at my leisure. We were walking along the road, when we saw a gray squirrel run down a tree in Mr. Burke's woods, and we went after him. He ran right toward the clearing; and just as we were going to rush out, I saw Helen and Mr. Ashton talking, as she says, very soberly and earnestly. Of course, we did not interrupt them, but I kept watch until I saw them shake hands and part."

"I imagine here lies the secret of your absent-mindedness," said Mrs. White, to Helen, after Will had left the room; "now, you will tell us all about it, will you not?"

"Certainly I will," answered Helen. "I went to sit a while by Willie Burke's grave, and found Mr. Ashton there reading. I insisted upon leaving, but he objected so strongly that I remained; and after a very little conversation he left."

"What did he say?" asked Minnie, becoming a little inquisitive.

Helen's memory seemed to have grown, suddenly, very treacherous. She could not recollect a word of what she knew so well but a few moments before, and she replied,

"He made some inquiries about the graves, and this family."

"O, I wish you had invited him to call here," said Minnie; and her mother added,

"Yes, I should like to see him."

"I did not invite him, but he said perhaps he should do so, and I think he will," said Helen.

Will never forgot his promise to settle with Helen at

his leisure, but his leisure hours all chanced to come on Sunday, when they were riding from church, or after service, when she wished to spend them alone, in reflection.

To say that Helen loved Mr. Ashton after their first interview, in the sense in which loving is commonly understood, might, perhaps, be doing her injustice ; but she herself would willingly have acknowledged that, aside from her high respect for his character, she greatly admired both his address and personal appearance. These influences are the foundation of all true esteem, and the heart, once impressed with them, very rapidly yields to the influence of the sweeter passion.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Early one morning the carriage was standing before the gate, in readiness for Mr. White, who was going to the city on business, when Mr. Ashton came round the corner, on foot. When he reached the gate he stopped, and leaned thoughtfully against it. John was in the yard, and thinking he might be waiting to speak to some of the family, he approached him, with the pleasant salutation,

"The top o' the mornin' to yer reverence, sir! may be ye 'd like to see some of them within."

"Good morning!" replied Mr. Ashton. "Will you tell me if this carriage is to take any of the family to town this morning?"

"Yes, to be sure! Is n't it every other morning Misther White goes to the store!"

"Will he return this evening?" inquired Mr. Ashton.

"Sure, he 'll be back at tay time, or near that."

"Is he going alone?" continued the clergyman.

"He is, sure. May be ye 'd be likin' to share the seat," said John. "Misther White will be comin' himself directly, and then ye can ask him, and it 's meself knows he 'll not refuse." Then, as if recollecting himself, he said, "but may be ye 'd just step into the house and take a seat."

"No, I thank you; I will wait here. I am obliged to go to the city, this morning, and have no means of getting there. I think it probable Mr. White will

have no objection to my company, if he is intending to go alone."

"Not the least, I 'm sure," said John.

"John!" cried a voice from the door of the house, "take this glass jar and put it into the carriage; be careful and not break it."

"He is quite ready now," said John, as he went to do as he was bidden, and in a moment more he came back with Mr. White. "This is your own *praste*," said he to that gentleman, as they came near to Mr. Ashton, by way of introduction. "He 's business in town, and not a bit of a horse. May be, sir, ye 'd not be dislikin' his company, and he 'll go with ye."

"Good morning, sir!" said Mr. White, extending his hand to Mr. Ashton. "Certainly, I shall be glad of your company. Take a seat in the carriage, and we will be off immediately."

Mr. Ashton hesitated a moment, and then said, "I should have expressed my wishes in the form of a request, and I hope you will take it so from me; your man's confidence in your kindness will not warrant presumption on my part."

"No apology necessary. I know John well; it is all right; step into the carriage, if you please," said Mr. White, and turning to John, he continued, "John, you may draw off the water of the fish-pond, to-day, and rake out the rubbish, and throw a little fresh gravel over the bottom, and have it filled, ready for the fish I shall bring when I come back; and be careful you don't make a fish of yourself in the operation."

"Never fear," said John, "ye 'll not be back till it 's done."

Mr. White then stepped into the carriage, and cracking his whip once, "Mike" started gayly toward the city.

"May I ask the double favor of returning with you?" said Mr. Ashton, immediately after they had started.

"Certainly, sir," replied Mr. White; "but I leave town rather early."

"My business will detain me there but a short time," replied the clergyman, "and I shall be glad to get back as soon as possible;" and he added, "do you know any thing of old Mr. Douglas, who lives about a mile up the road from your residence?"

"I do not," said Mr. White, "why do you inquire?"

"He is very ill, and I fear can not recover," replied Ashton; "but he is poor, and has been wholly without medical aid during his illness, and I am going to consult some good physician for him to-day. I have a little hope he may yet be saved."

"And this, then, is your errand to town?"

"Yes, sir."

"And do you intend to take as much care of all the poor people in your parish?"

"I wish to do all I am able for them. I consider it my duty."

"Then let me tell you, my young friend, you have got your hands full without your preaching, and mark my word, when you are ten years older you will have different ideas of duty."

"I hope I shall never see it my duty to neglect the poor."

"I know," said Mr. White, "every young clergyman hopes just so, but before a great while he finds he is getting poor himself; however, don't understand me to object to your errand to-day. Is the old gentleman able to pay for the physician's advice?"

"He is not, and objected strongly to my consulting one, on that very account; but he is a worthy man,

and does a great deal of good when he is well, and I am not at all willing to see him sink into the grave from neglect."

"Certainly not," said Mr. White, "and if you ever again need a horse to assist him, there is one standing idle in my stable, and John will harness him for you at any time, or you can ride with me if you choose."

"Thank you! I may be glad to avail myself of your kind permission."

"It is no kindness, sir. My horse is idle, and it is better that he should be used. I hope you will not infer, from my manner of speaking, that I would advise you to become less benevolent. I merely suggested that you had duties to yourself as well as to others, and it is a part of my creed that 'charity begins at home.' This thing I have often noticed—the poor, in every parish, have an idea that their minister is bound to provide for all their wants, especially if they are members of the church; and if they suffer in the least, they consider *him* accountable for it. Now this is all wrong."

"Perhaps they know that when a person undertakes the work of the ministry he devotes himself entirely to his heavenly Master's service."

"They seem to think he devotes himself to their service, I am certain, but it 's all wrong. A dominie, just because he is a dominie, has not really any more obligation resting upon him in this matter than I have. To be sure he has more time for such things, and ought to look to them more, but he ought to have a salary for it. If he performs my Christian duties I hold I ought to pay him for it."

"You have taken altogether a novel ground, I think," said Mr. Ashton, smiling.

"Well, is n't it pretty nearly the correct one? You

clergymen must live, and if you employ your time in assisting those who would otherwise be thrown upon our charity, is n't it our duty to pay you? Don't you really see the matter so? Every man wants a remuneration for his labors."

"Our reward is from heaven."

"But, my young friend, you are getting too far the other side of right. Don't you know such a reward will not keep you from starving? but it 's very good in its place, I acknowledge."

"It is more to be desired than riches."

"Were you reduced to real want, I imagine you would say as the old lady did, 'a little of both if you please, sir.' We must not carry our belief any further than we are willing to carry our practice."

"Very true, sir, I admit," said the young clergyman; "but I have not intimated that I would be justifiable in neglecting myself; but let me present the subject in a different light. Am I at liberty to gather together more of the good things of this life than I can profitably use or enjoy, and hoard up these treasures, while my neighbor is suffering for the simplest necessaries? If my Maker has given to me better business faculties than he has given to that neighbor, or has placed me in circumstances where it is easier for me to become wealthy than it is for him to become so, am I not, therefore, under responsibilities correspondingly greater, to assist him who is less favored than I am?"

"Wife has preached that very same doctrine to me for years," answered Mr. White; "but, after all, she finds it very comfortable to sit down with the reflection that there is something laid up for her against a rainy day; but she does just as she preaches; and she, and Helen, too, are constantly presenting me with pauper taxes."

"But, of course, you follow your own inclination about paying them."

"Not at all! I long ago handed the keeping of my conscience, in these matters, over to them, and I do just as they tell me, and that is living exactly up to my creed, as I stated it before—they attend to my deeds of charity, and I pay them for it."

"Perhaps, in this individual case, the system works well, but I should doubt its expediency as a universal means of performing duties. Will you tell me, if the Helen of whom you spoke of is your daughter?"

"No, sir, she is not! She is a girl wife heard of several years ago; she was at the hospital with a broken arm, and wife had her brought to the house, and cared for, until she recovered. They are just alike, and they work together well."

Mr. Ashton was certain he knew who Helen was, and he asked no further questions concerning her. They had now reached the city, and he inquired of Mr. White what physician he had better consult. This gentleman's preferences were always for Doctor Duval; and turning round a corner, they stopped before his office. The doctor came out to meet them, and Mr. White said,

"Doctor Duval, I will make you acquainted with Mr. Ashton, the pastor of our parish in the country. Please give him the information he desires, and whatever else you may think necessary, and charge to my account;" then turning to Mr. Ashton, who had alighted, he continued, "I will call here for you at four o'clock," and drove away to his store.

The doctor's sympathies were quickly enlisted in behalf of the invalid, when he heard Mr. Ashton's story; and after he had given directions how to manage the case, and prepared several remedies, he

placed a piece of money in the young minister's hand, and said,

"I will make my charge against Mr. White, but the money you may carry to your patient. I can not receive pay in a case like this."

"You are very kind," said Mr. Ashton. "I do not feel at liberty to refuse what you offer for Mr. Douglas, but I will return you thanks, which I know he will express when he receives this from me."

"Sir," said the doctor, drawing a chair near to Mr. Ashton, and taking a seat upon it, "I think you, ministers, as a class, make great mistakes in regard to the duties of your office."

"How shall I understand you?" said Mr. Ashton, a little puzzled.

"To explain: I mean to say, you preach too much, and practice too little."

"In any one respect, or in general?" again inquired Mr. Ashton.

"You profess to have devoted yourselves to the promotion of righteousness, and to the spread of the Gospel of Christ. Now, as I read that Gospel, it consists in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, distributing to the necessities of saints; and not in spending six whole days of the week preparing a moral essay to be read in the church, to the rich, on the seventh."

"And a little further on, we are commanded by Christ himself to preach that Gospel to every creature," said Mr. Ashton.

"But you don't do it. You only preach to such as are pleased to attend church. You can not obey that command unless you go from house to house, among the poor, as well as the rich," said the other.

"These, certainly, ought we to do, but not to leave the other undone," continued Mr. Ashton. "The

souls of men are in as great danger of perishing as their *bodies*, and as the value of the soul is infinitely greater than that of the body, we should bestow upon it our first thoughts."

"I can not agree with you," replied the doctor. "The Creator never made a soul, and then suffered it to be lost. It is madness to believe that he did."

"We see enough every day to convince us that punishment follows sin, and why not believe that the sinful *soul* shall be punished?" remarked Mr. Ashton.

"It does not sin in the future world, and it is punished in this for the sins committed in this," said the doctor.

"But your theology fails, I think, to explain why some of the righteous, and the very best people in this world, suffer all their lives long, and finally die in wretchedness, while the vicious are prosperous, and, apparently, happy."

The doctor knit his brows, and for a time was silent. He had stumbled over this same truth before. At length, however, he remarked, "God is merciful."

"True," said Mr. Ashton; "and yet he is just, and will assuredly punish those who abuse his mercy; but if rewards and punishments are all received in this world, we must, certainly, believe him unjust and partial."

"We do not all see these matters in the same light," replied the doctor, "consequently we believe differently; but when we have once embraced a belief it is a difficult thing to change, and I doubt whether we shall ever come to agree."

"Perhaps our early education has made us to differ; but we should be willing to examine both sides of the question, and if our reason and judgment tell us we are in the wrong, we should be willing to embrace the truth."

"My education was exactly like yours, but experience has proved more successful in teaching than were my parents, and I am convinced that I am nearer the truth now, than when I thought as you do."

"Have you ever been urged by the sweet voice of affection, to obey the requirements of that Being who will, certainly, punish the disobedient?"

"I have," said the doctor, hastily; "but when you take such a turn in the discussion you unman me; you must deal with my reason, and not with my affections. With your consent we will drop the subject, and if opportunity offers we will resume it at some future time. There is a something which you can not know, which drives me to request you to discontinue this conversation for the present."

The doctor maintained a moody silence during the remainder of Mr. Ashton's stay, when in his presence, but much of the time he left him quite alone. Mr. Ashton was a man of keen perceptions, and he saw, from this short conversation, how unstable were the principles of his new acquaintance, and that his adherence to them was influenced more by will than by the dictates of reason.

Mr. White did not come until near half an hour after the appointed time, and then, holding up the glass jar which John had placed in the carriage, and displaying half a dozen goldfish, which were manifesting great uneasiness in their contracted quarters, said: "Minnie thought she could not wait another day for her fish, and I have been detained in finding them. Have you obtained all the advice you needed, Mr. Ashton?"

"Yes, sir, more than I expected, since the doctor has never seen the patient."

"Doctor," said Mr. White, "are you very busy at present?"

"Not as much so as usual. I have been engaged in keeping people well, so effectually, that I am losing business rapidly."

"Could n't you ride out to-morrow and see Mr. Douglas? I think it would be well."

"Just as well as not," said the doctor.

"It might be the means of saving his life," remarked Mr. Ashton; "but your kindness, gentlemen, is very great, and entirely unexpected."

"It will be for the doctor's health," said Mr. White; "and wife will rest better to-night if she thinks I 'm remembering my duties a little; so the kindness is all toward ourselves; "don't trouble yourself to mention it, Mr. Ashton."

"You undertake the assistance of Mr. Douglas so cheerfully," replied the young clergyman, "I may presume to tax your benevolence at some future time."

"I hope you will," said the doctor; "you will always find me ready to help the poor, I think."

Minnie and John had both been some time at the gate waiting the return of Mr. White. Minnie prompted by her eagernesss to see the gold fish, and John to take charge of the carriage. Minnie caught sight of the bright yellow pets while they were yet some distance away, for Mr. Ashton was holding the jar in which they were upon his knee, and before he had time to alight she reached forward her hand to receive them.

"O, thank you, papa!" she exclaimed; "I shall kiss you a great many times for your kindness in bringing me these. How bright and beautiful they are. What fine times they will have in the fresh water in the pond;" and as she spoke, with a gentle toss of her head, she threw back the beautiful ringlets, which no less became her fair features then, than they had done in the days of childhood.

"But look here!" said her father, taking up Mr. Ashton's hand. "The water has spilled all over these gloves, and I am afraid they are ruined, and these pantaloons, too, are all wet, and the dust with the water has entirely spoiled them! What are you going to do about this? You or Mike must, certainly, be to blame for it, and we shall have to hold you responsible for a new pair."

A deep blush shot across the face of the sweet girl, but it immediately vanished as she said,

"No, papa, you must be the one at fault; you have driven very carelessly, I 'm sure. You must get the new pair."

"It is a matter of no consequence, whatever," said Mr. Ashton; "they will very soon dry."

"Certainly it is," replied Mr. White, "and Minnie must pay for damages. But I think we 'll postpone the suit a few days, since you are in some haste. John," he continued; "take the lines and drive wherever our friend chooses to go."

"I must decline letting him do so," said Mr. Ashton, rising to alight. "I am very much obliged for your kindness, but I will walk the rest of the way."

"By no means," replied Mr. White. "Keep your seat; it is getting late, and since I detained you half-an-hour, I feel bound to do what I can to make up the time."

Minnie herself turned the jar over the pond, and let the fish drop, one by one, into the clear water. They spread their finny wings as they fell into their native element, and darted away in a company, as if on an exploring expedition, just stopping to touch their noses to each projecting stone, and then away again, making the circuit of the pond over and over again. When the fountain played they hid themselves in the niches

of the surrounding wall to avoid the pelting shower, and when quiet was restored, resumed their gambols in the open water.

Toys and playthings are always pleasing and valuable to their little owners, but there is something in a living pet which is far more pleasing, even to the smallest child, while it does not fail to offer attractions to the most mature. The gambols of a kitten, the sweet song of a Canary, and the sports of a less approachable fish, seldom fail to doom senseless dolls to utter neglect—and this is owing simply to the principle of life. That which is so dear in ourselves renders the presence of the same principle correspondingly dear to us.

When Mr. Ashton witnessed the gratitude of Mr. Douglas, and heard him raise his feeble voice to offer the prayer of thanksgiving and faith, freighted with petitions for blessings upon his benefactors, he felt that, truly, he was receiving a sufficient reward for his labor of love, while yet on earth's side of heaven; and when, after a few weeks, strength came again to the invalid, and he went forth with renewed health and vigor, the young pastor became more and more fixed in his resolution to remember the poor.

CHAPTER XXX.

"I HAVE drawn your easy chair out upon the piazza," said Helen to Mrs. White, one sultry afternoon in July, "the sun is now entirely away from that side of the house, and there seems to be a little more air stirring there, and I am sure you will find the place more comfortable than it is here."

"Thank you, Helen," said Mrs. White; "you are very thoughtful. I have hardly been able to catch a single free breath to-day," and as she accepted the offered seat, she exclaimed, "O, how refreshing!"

Mr. White had taken a pillow and was lying upon the grass, under the trees, for he had not sufficient courage to brave the confined heat of the city on such a day. His face was covered with his handkerchief, and one would have believed him sleeping, had not the sudden striking of his hands about his ears, every few moments, given indisputable evidence of the contrary. Minnie was sitting by her mother, testing the cooling powers of a great palm-leaf fan, and watching with no little feeling of merriment, the restlessness of her father. Will had followed Mr. White's example, but was even more restless. He had rolled about till the grass, for yards around him, was bent down by his weight. All at once he gave a hearty laugh, and said, rising to meet Mr. Ashton, who was just then coming up one of the walks toward the house,

"Excuse the manner of this reception, if you please, Mr. Ashton, but I could not refrain from laughing. I

have been watching father, yonder. That great blue fly has been singing about his head this half-hour, and he has struck at him until, I believe, he has dislocated his shoulder."

"Yes," said Mr. White, drawing the handherchief from his face, and rising, "blue-bottle has been serenading me, much to my annoyance."

"Don't let me disturb you," said Mr. Ashton; "I called especially to see Mrs. White and your daughter."

"I'll just get up and tell them who you are," replied Mr. White, cheerfully, "and then, if I choose to stay, I may be allowed to do so, I suppose."

Helen saw them coming toward the piazza, and before they reached it she had provided two comfortable chairs for their accommodation, and hesitating a moment, until the introduction was over, she said,

"I think you will find it more comfortable here, Mr. White, than it is within doors, and perhaps you had better take these seats."

"You are a girl after my own heart, Helen," replied Mr. White. "I have entirely forgotten to take any thought for my own comfort, you anticipate all my wishes, and are so ready to gratify them; but come back here," he continued, as she was quietly slipping through the door; "a dominie always wants to see the whole family, and you and I must stay here now." She did as she was desired; and when she received the hand which Mr. Ashton extended, as was his custom in friendly greeting, the sensation which she had once before felt, came back, and she blushed for fear it might have been noticed.

"I called," remarked Mr. Ashton, looking at Minnie, as soon as all were seated, "to thank you, Miss White, for the very valuable, but unexpected present, I received from you last evening; and," he continued, as

Minnie looked with surprise at him, and then at her father, "I think the little accident called for no such consideration; but I accept the gift as a present, and thank you for it."

"Why! what do you mean?" asked Minnie.

"Why, the piece of cloth and the gloves you sent me last evening," said Mr. Ashton.

"I'm sure I don't know any thing of it at all," replied Minnie; "but papa's eyes look roguish, and I think *he* knows what it means; and, now, I know, too," she exclaimed, joyfully. "Papa knew he was to blame for letting the water spill upon your clothes, and he has sent the others in my name, not thinking I should find it out."

"Mr. Ashton," said Mr. White, in a beseeching tone, "don't you see how you are exposing me. I beg you won't say another word about the matter; you will not, I am sure, if you have any regard for my feelings."

"I may express my obligation to you, may I not?" said the other.

"O, no," replied Mr. White; "only consider the damage repaired, and all will be settled."

"I must inquire after the fish," said Mr. Ashton, again addressing Minnie. "I suppose you have enjoyed their company much."

"Don't you think," answered Minnie, a little sorrowfully, "they are all dead?"

"How happened that?" inquired the other.

"I suppose I killed them," said she; "but I don't know. Papa said it was better not to feed them; but I loved to see them catch crumbs, and I wanted to do it, and gave them a great deal to eat day before yesterday; and yesterday morning, when I went to look at them, they were all floating on their backs upon the top of the water."

Mrs. White very soon became earnestly engaged in conversation with the clergyman, and the time stole rapidly by. Both were much surprised when the bell called them to supper, and announced the hour of six. A single request induced Mr. Ashton to remain, though not without first offering a slight apology that he had been so forgetful of the time.

Time was never long, when spent in company with this family. Their cheerful, friendly manner banished all feeling of diffidence or estrangement; and the kind welcome which they at this time extended to their visitor, rendered his stay more than ordinarily agreeable.

"Would n't you like to take a stroll over the grounds?" said Will to Mr. Ashton, when they arose from the table.

"Certainly I should," replied the other; and the two went down the walk which led toward the arbor of saplings.

As soon as Minnie discovered where they were going, she followed, and joined in their conversation, and appeared as much interested in all they saw as if she then beheld it for the first time.

"Wife," said Mr. White, when he saw how unhesitatingly she had joined the ramblers, "what are you going to do with Minnie? She is almost a young lady now, and seems perfectly unconscious of the fact; she has gone after Mr. Ashton as freely as if she were a little child."

"What am I going to do with her?" repeated Mrs. White. "I shall keep her a little girl just as long as I can. I would not have her get the idea that she was a young lady."

"It may answer when her fancies are for the dominie," continued her father; "but when we go back to town, she will, probably, be considered as she really is."

"I hope so, to be sure," said Mrs. White; "unsuspecting and artless: these are what make her the lovely girl she is."

"She is a little too frank and open-hearted, in my opinion," said the father.

"O, I think not! These traits are the charm of her character," replied the other.

"See her now," said Mr. White, pointing to a green plat by the brook-side, upon which she had seated herself, and was inviting Mr. Ashton to sit beside her. "One of our city masters would hardly know what to think of a young lady who appeared so familiar after so short an acquaintance."

Mrs. White looked at her daughter; her face was lighted with animation, her clustering ringlets were displaced by the gentle evening breeze which was just rising, and hung carelessly about her shoulders; and she thought she appeared more lovely than ever, and she replied, "I am glad to see her so."

Minnie was, really, more engaged in this conversation than ordinarily. She was relating the story of the party, which she well remembered, when Louise Doxtater pushed her into the brook, and after she had finished the recital, she said,

"That was when we first began to love Helen, and we have loved her every day since better and better."

Mr. Ashton made many inquiries respecting Helen, which Minnie freely answered. She told him that she was an orphan, and was taken when a very little child by Mr. Burke, and that was why she was called Helen Burke, but that she had a prettier name, though it was very long since she had been called by it. She told him, too, of the time when she was a market-girl, and how her arm was broken, and how kind and gentle she had always been since she came to live with them.

Mr. Ashton was an attentive listener to the narrative. He had gathered fragments of Helen's history by occasional reference to her, so that his interest had become considerably awakened, and he was glad to learn more of it. Her retiring modesty during the afternoon had not failed to attract his attention, and he had not only observed, but admired it. He had spoken to her but few times, and when he did so her answers were so short and satisfactory that he found it impossible to engage her in conversation. So interested were Mr. Ashton and Minnie in this conversation, that they did not observe how chilly the air was growing, until Helen approached and laid a shawl over the young girl's shoulders.

"Miss Burke," said Mr. Ashton, rising, when he saw what Helen had done, and recollected how imprudent he had been: "I do not think I shall take more than half the blame if Miss White finds she has taken a severe cold. I suggested, when we first took this seat, that it might be imprudent, but *she* thought otherwise, and has been so entertaining since that I entirely forgot myself."

"Minnie was never ill a day in her whole life," replied Helen, "and I think that may account for her carelessness at times. I find she requires considerable watching."

"Perhaps we had better return to the house," said Mr. Ashton.

"You would be perfectly safe out of doors, I am sure, if you were walking," remarked Helen; and turning to Minnie, she continued, "you have n't shown Mr. Ashton our favorite piece of statuary; I think he would be pleased to see it." Then making a single apology for interrupting them, she turned to go into the house.

"Will you not join us in our walk?" said Mr. Ash-

ton to her when he saw that she was leaving. "Our friend Will has left us, and we must have some one to fill his place."

They wandered about the grove until the long gray shadows of the trees became distinctly visible, and it was time for the visitor to commence his walk homeward.

If Mr. Ashton admired Helen's modest demeanor during the afternoon, far more did he admire her gentleness and intelligence when the mantle of restraint was thrown off, and she engaged freely with him in conversation. He was not slow to learn her true character, and the "small hours" of that beautiful night found him sitting by the windows of his quiet study, lost in deep, but pleasing thoughts.

The pastor was not studying the hidden meaning of a disputed passage of Scripture, nor was he meditating upon some comforting promises which he might upon the coming Sabbath present to his little flock, neither did the beauties of that summer night engage his thoughts. O, no! it was something very different from any of these. He would have declined revealing what it was, and, gentle reader, you must here be left to your own conjectures.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Do you remember what I told you, Nellie Lincoln?" said old Barbara Dunn, as she came into the road to meet Mrs. White and Helen, who were riding leisurely along to enjoy the delightful air of the early morning, a few days after her visit to their home. Helen, who was generally Mrs. White's attendant in her morning rides, checked the horse to answer this inquiry. "Do you remember what I told you? there will be but a very little more darkness before the light will shine for me in the grave-yard."

"Why, how do you know this, Barbara?" asked Helen.

"The future is clearer than the present, to me," replied the maniac; "for the light is shining in it." And after adding her old injunction, "be coy of the storms, Nellie Lincoln, for your light went out on the water," she turned to leave them.

Helen knew it to be useless to attempt to detain her, but she waited, and watched her until she had entered her hut.

"Let us go in," said Mrs. White, "and see if she has enough to make her comfortable."

Barbara paid little or no attention to them after their entrance, but busied herself placing a quantity of sticks she had collected, in a broad pile in the chimney-place.

"You are not cold, are you, Barbara?" asked Mrs. White, after having watched her some minutes.

"No, not cold," replied the other, uttering one of her horrid laughs; "no, not cold, but the light is to shine very soon."

"Are you going to make a light with that wood?" again asked Mrs. White; and again Barbara replied,

"There will be a greater light than the wood can make;" and her loud laugh rung through the hovel.

"It is very strange," said Mrs. White to Helen, after they were again seated in the carriage, and the gentle Lightfoot was trotting along at his favorite pace; "very strange, indeed, what Barbara means by the light. She introduces it into every sentence she utters."

"Yes," replied the other; "and if she can not do so she will omit answering a question, however much you may urge her; but I can not see why she talks as she does to me; if I were at all superstitious it would trouble me, and I confess to a little uneasiness once in a while. I know better—still her remarks are not without their influence upon me."

"Such things are unavoidable," remarked Mrs. White.

Not more than half an hour after, when Mrs. White and Helen, on their return, again neared Barbara's home, they were startled by loud piercing cries, as of a person suffering intensely. It was evidently old Barbara, and upon looking, they discovered smoke issuing from her door; hastening to open it, they were horrified at the spectacle which met their eyes. The pile of wood in the chimney-place was nearly consumed, and the wretched inmate of the hovel lay upon the floor terribly burned. The fire was still doing its dreadful work, and Barbara, rolling her eyes in agony toward them as they entered, exclaimed,

"The light, the light in the grave-yard, Nellie Lin-

coln; I warn you to be coy of the storms, for your light went out on the water!"

They succeeded in extinguishing the flames, which were still being fed by the remaining clothes of the maniac, and placed her upon the bed which she had made in the midst of her darkness.

There was no doubt that Barbara had been her own destroyer; that in her collected moments—if, indeed, the mad may have such moments—she had planned and accomplished this destruction. To give Helen an intimation of her intentions was probably the cause of her visit at Mrs. White's, and the light in the grave-yard, in expectation of which she had been living for years, it was then easy to see, was not to burn until she should become a dweller in that "silent city."

During three days the neighboring farm-wives thought of little else than to procure comforts for old Barbara. It is comparatively easy to meet misfortune in the country, where selfishness is a plant of but feeble growth, and where man is taught, by the bountifully yielding earth, to open his hand and supply the wants of the needy. But there were days and nights destitute of comfort to her who was the object of this care, and anxiously did the watchers by this bedside wait for life's closing hour.

Toward the close of the afternoon of the third day after old Barbara was burned, Helen stood beside her. The pain of the sufferer had been forgotten in a calm deep sleep, and the usual look of madness was gone from her features. Every succeeding breath was shorter than the previous one, and old Barbara seemed indeed approaching the light which she had so often said should shine for her in the grave-yard. Suddenly a tremor seized her, and she writhed convulsively. It continued but a moment, after which her eyes

opened mildly, and she cast a gentle look, such as those eyes had not known for years, upon those around her. *Barbara was herself again.*

"Nellie," said she, in a voice which betrayed a sorrow wholly destitute of wildness, "this has been a terrible night, a long, long night;" and tears filled those eyes whose glaring balls had not been moistened in years before.

Helen took the extended hand of the sufferer as she added:

"But there is light for me beyond this darkness."

"It is a heavenly light, is it not, Barbara?" asked Helen.

"O, yes," she replied, "the light of happiness and heaven;" and she continued, "in that wild, wild storm, upon the ocean, the light of my earthly happiness went out forever."

"What do you mean, Barbara?" again asked Helen, almost confident that she should now receive a satisfactory answer.

"Don't you remember," said Barbara, wonderingly, "how the Argos sank in the storm yesterday, and my William, whose absence for a single day made me wretched, was lost forever, and your father went down with him? O, how could I sleep in such sorrow? But I did, and I have passed a terrible night; the storm has been raging all around me; and, O! it has been so dark!"

"Did you know my father, Barbara?" asked Helen.

"Yes," replied the now rational woman; "he was a noble man, and my husband was the captain of his vessel. Nellie, you will never know what you have lost; you are so young." Then, looking steadily at her she was addressing, she said, in a tone of great surprise, "But you are not young now. You were a very little

girl when I last saw you. Where have I been? Am I dreaming?"

"No, Barbara. I have grown since my father's death, which happened many years ago, and I can not now remember him. I want to learn something of him. Tell me all you know."

"*Many years* since, indeed," repeated Barbara; "and where have I been? Did my reason leave me? Was it this which made the time so like one long terrible night? I am not mistaken now, am I? I am myself, am I not?" and she looked around the place doubtingly.

"Yes," replied Helen; "you are perfectly yourself."

"Yes, truly the light—"

Nature here gave way; the tongue became powerless; and old Barbara was at rest, where there shall be no more night; where "they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." Helen Lincoln wept as she closed the eyes of her father's friend.

"There is a tear for *all* that die,
A mourner o'er the humblest grave."

CHAPTER XXXII.

The delightful days of summer passed away. The rich crimson, scarlet, and yellow of the dying leaves of the beech, the birch, and the maple, mingled with the never-fading green of the pine and hemlock, till "the vast woodland seemed a sea of flowers." Nature, like a happy bride, put away her simple, maiden dress, and arrayed herself in her richest robe, to welcome the stern lord of the year, Winter. The wind howled mournfully through the grove, as if in bitter lamentation at her choice. The "country seat" was then all quiet again, and the pale statues stood, cold, and mute, and neglected, as they had done in former years. But Mr. White's family did not leave this delightful place without many deep regrets.

From the school of nature, which Minnie had for months enjoyed, she went to attend the fashionable, formal one of the city; and often, when she returned home at evening, vexed and perplexed with its monotony and formality, did she sigh for the enjoyments of the departed summer. True, she could study the beautiful flowers, and count their delicate stamens in the painted plates of her Botany; but she loved far better to dwell among living flowers. While she sought, by pushing back the silken petals, to enjoy the delicious perfume as the sweet aroma arose and filled the air, so she could read how the leaves of the forest trees really breathed and drew nourishment from the atmosphere. But she loved better to watch the flow-

ers, as they increased in size and number; and to sit beneath their pleasant shade, at the scorching hour of noon-day. Could Minnie have been unhappy, she would have been so then; but her elastic spirits were not easily crushed, and after hours of tedious confinement, she would come forth as bright and gay as if she had received no check.

Minnie White was not formed to be re-moulded at another's will; and the long years which she had spent in the fashionable seminary proved too short to metamorphose her; and she left it as she had entered, unsuspecting and artless. She had grown, meanwhile, and discretion had ripened with her years; but true simplicity never fails to please, and the young lady was no less lovely than the child. And Will, too, had changed. Time leaves nothing without his impress upon it. He was what his boyhood had plainly predicted he would be. In college he was a favorite in his class, not as the possessor of the brightest intellect, but as the jovial, friendly companion, the open-hearted, generous youth.

One evening, about the middle of the third year of his absence at college, while the family were all gathered together, a young gentleman called at the residence of Mr. White, and handing him a letter, sat down, without revealing his name or errand. Mr. White glanced hastily at the contents, and then rising, extended his hand to Harry Lee and bade him a hearty welcome.

"So you have concluded to become a resident of our city," said Mr. White, after the visitor had received a greeting from each member of the family.

"For the present, at least," he replied; then turning to Mrs. White, he continued, "I have a note to you from your son. I left him only yesterday."

"Happy, of course," said Mr. White, as his wife began reading Will's note.

"Yes, sir! he is always in fine spirits, and there is not another student in college who can number as many warm friends as he," replied Mr. Lee; "all find it a pleasant rest from study to spend an hour in his society."

"Will is a very musical fellow," remarked his father.

"Yes, he is. His store of wit seems inexhaustible, and he is invariably in good humor. He is calculated to make friends wherever he may be."

"He 'll never make much of a scholar, I conclude," said Mr. White.

"He has no difficulty in maintaining his position in his class," replied Mr. Lee.

"Ah, no! he would have too much pride to fall behind," continued the father. "Will is a proud fellow."

"Certainly it is a pride for which he is to be commended," said the other. "I find very much in him to admire; his gentlemanly deportment is certainly very becoming."

"If it will be agreeable to you all, I should like to read this letter aloud," said Mrs. White, interrupting their conversation. "It is so like Will."

They all expressed a desire to hear it, and she read as follows:

"Cambridge, —— ——.

"My Dear Mother—Harry Lee, the bearer of this letter, is a fine fellow, just such an one as you, in your maternal wisdom, have been endeavoring, all my life, to teach me to become. But I doubt the truth of the old saying, 'Just as the twig is bent the tree 's inclined,' except so far as it is applied to the animal kingdom; and if I admit the truth that 'all flesh is grass,' which

would make a vegetable of me, I shall be obliged to consider it a rule, even then, subject to exceptions. Yes, mother, I incline exactly the opposite way from that in which you strove to bend me.

"But away with aphorisms. Harry has called purposely to testify to my good behavior while away from your watchful care, and to present himself as a specimen of my associates. But to know him you must be with him, and I recommend you, or rather ask you, for my sake, to invite him to remain with you a week or two, until he has a little opportunity to become acquainted in town. He graduated a year ago last commencement, and has since been engaged in the institution as tutor, an hour or two of each day, and has employed the remainder of his time reading law.

"Please say to father that I am improving rapidly. I find no trouble whatever in disposing of three Havanas a-day, never come out with less than 'honors easy' at whist, and have so far crowded myself into the good graces of the 'Prex' that he consented to let me accompany his niece to a concert, one evening last week. I have nearly reached the goal of my ambition, namely, a '*sheepskin*,' and hardly think I shall visit home again until that is secured. With a kiss for Minnie, and love to Helen, I remain your affectionate boy,

"WILL."

"According to Will's own account," remarked Mr. White, "he is striving to obey the command, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.'"

"I can assure you," said Mr. Lee, "he is improving in different branches from those in which he has chosen to mention, and brings no dishonor upon his parents. His love of study may not be as strong as that of oth-

ers; but feeling the importance of an education, he is making commendable efforts to secure one."

"Well," said Mr. White, a little hurriedly, "the evening is wearing away, will you tell me where your baggage may be found?"

"I have had it taken to my room at the hotel," replied Mr. Lee.

"But you are to be our guest for a few weeks," said the other.

"O no, I thank you, sir," replied the young gentleman; "I was ignorant of the contents of Will's letter, and beg leave to decline his invitation."

"You may do as you please with *his*, but I shall insist upon your acceptance of *mine*," said Mr. White. "You'll get home-sick at a hotel, I'm sure; but if you are here, I think we can keep you in tolerable spirits, at least."

All Harry Lee's excuses were vain. For Mr. White did insist upon having his invitation accepted, and John was dispatched for the young gentleman's baggage.

Mr. White's acquaintance and experience proved invaluable aids to the stranger in securing the situation he desired; and the three weeks which he spent in this family, afforded him opportunity to form many agreeable acquaintances. Much of the time, however, was spent in Minnie's society. They played at backgammon and chess, or amused themselves with an entertaining book while at home, but oftener passed the time enjoying some favorite drive, and when, at length, he left, his absence was noticed, almost equally with Will's.

There was that in Harry Lee's appearance which could not fail to attract both attention and admiration. His broad, full forehead bespoke a master intellect; his

deep, mild eye showed him a person of gentle thoughts; while the unaffected dignity which ever characterized him, revealed his truly noble nature. His society and friendship were courted by all who met him; and the kind and gentlemanly manner in which he received and answered such attentions, was particularly noticeable.

Mr. Lee's most ardent admirer was Louise Doxtater. Experienced in all the schemes and tricks of coquetry, she was able to secure much of his notice; and often did he find it difficult, honorably and kindly, to thwart her well-arranged plans. Quick and cunning she certainly was, and possessing every advantage of wealth, she was able to influence, in a great measure, the society in which she moved, and in the ranks of the fashionable she shone, "a bright, particular star," receiving the willing homage of the lovers of gold and the lovers of pleasure. She could not boast a handsome face, but her figure was tall and commanding, and her showy and costly apparel gave her a queenly appearance.

One lovely morning in the early part of September, about a week after Will's return from college, he dropped into the office where his friend Harry was pursuing the study of the law, and found him poring over a huge volume of Kent; and taking the book from his hand, he said,

"Come, come, chum, you have n't lent me but one eye since I came to town, the other is always prying into some twist of the law. This is one of the finest days you ever saw, but you will never find it out unless I take you away from this office; what say you to taking a trip to Hoboken to-day."

The student leaned back in his chair, thrust both arms over his head, and after a hearty yawn, which showed plainly how much he needed relaxation, said, "I don't know, really. I should enjoy it much, but I

have determined to read fifty pages, besides doing considerable copying, to-day. I began at five o'clock this morning, and have only stopped long enough to breakfast since."

"Your fifty pages will do you no good while you are as dull as you are now; you need waking up, and to accept my invitation is, by far, the best way to do it," replied Will.

Harry was then easily persuaded, for he felt that he was confining himself too closely to his books, and began divesting himself of gown and slippers. "I shall claim the privilege of inviting your sister to accompany us," said he.

"I only thought of ourselves," said Will; "but if you choose to have Minnie's company, I shall invite my friend, Franky May."

"Very well," replied Harry; and after a moment's hesitation, he continued, "it seems to me you have quite a fancy for Miss May."

"So I have," said Will; "and don't you think her pretty?"

"Very pretty," said Harry; and taking his hat, he said, "if we are successful we will meet in half an hour at the foot of Barclay-street."

At the appointed time the company were standing among the crowd, by the ferry landing, waiting for the approaching boat, which was then in the middle of the stream. Just as they stepped upon the boat, an easily distinguished voice greeted them with—

"So, young ladies, we are to have your company to-day;" and Louise Doxtater came toward them, leaning upon the arm of Monsieur Boutillier. "A lovely morning this, Mr. Lee," she continued; then addressing Will, "I don't know that I shall say how d' ye do, to you, you've been so careful to neglect me since your return."

"Business is always a sufficient apology," replied Will, "and as such I will offer it."

"It will never answer for you," said the other. "I have known something of your whereabouts."

Will strove to manufacture a more acceptable excuse.

The boat soon touched the opposite shore; and after walking a short distance by the water's edge, and enjoying a refreshing draught from the well in the cave, the party strolled, in couples, into the shady woods. Minnie's unaffected admiration of every thing she saw, and her child-like expressions of pleasure, proved very entertaining to Mr. Lee; and not until the others had been a long time resting upon one of the benches in the Elysian Fields, did these join them.

"You are beginning well, Miss Minnie," exclaimed Louise, as the young girl seated herself beside her, her bonnet swinging from her arm, and her cheeks deeply flushed with the healthy exercise. "These protracted flirtations, at the outset, are dangerous, I assure you."

"O, we have been climbing all over the rocks, and you can not think how delightful it is," she exclaimed, not seeming to notice what Louise had said.

"I dare say it has been very delightful, you have had such delightful company," replied the other; and Minnie glanced into Mr. Lee's face and colored a little deeper, but the bright sparkle of her eye made no contradiction of the assertion, and Louise continued, "How do you know but I shall be jealous?"

"Perhaps Miss Doxtater would like to exchange seats with you," said Franky, purposely to tease Minnie, who, as she knew, had a strong aversion to the young Frenchman.

"I shall wait, at least, until she suggests the exchange," replied Minnie, "before I consent to it."

"If that is all that is necessary," said Louise, "I will

propose it immediately;" and, taking Mr. Lee's arm, she continued, "Mr. Lee, would n't you enjoy a walk to the other side of the field?"

Minnie saw herself left in the undesirable society of Monsieur Boutillier, and a frown came over her features, for she was half vexed with the thought that her companion should leave her so ungallantly. But he only yielded to the first effort which Louise made to draw him away, and then remarked, "I can not go except by Miss White's direction."

Minnie quickly caught the unexpected assistance which was given her in this remark, and said,

"I should not think of accompanying you here and then directing you to leave."

"Then I do not feel at liberty to go, Miss Doxtater," said he; "and under existing circumstances you will willingly excuse me if I decline your invitation."

"You are very particular," replied Louise. "I hope you will always be as much so. I think I will test you. We are contemplating a drive this evening, into the country, to visit two very fine young ladies; will you be one of the company?"

"I am not acquainted with any ladies in the country about here, and hardly feel willing to visit them without an invitation," said the other.

"If that is all your excuse, I can do away with it, at once: I have a standing invitation to bring you out there; perhaps you have heard of them, the Misses Hapwood."

"O, I know who they are. They used to come to see Helen, but they do not any more, now," said Minnie.

"Well, I should n't think they would," replied Louise. "She is n't a person they would wish to associate with, and besides, the fact that she lived

with Mr. Burke before he married their mother does not make it their duty. She is nothing but a servant-girl, and they are first-class young ladies."

"We don't consider her a servant-girl," said Minnie, a little energetically; "she is a very lovely girl, and if you knew her better you would not speak so slightly of her."

"Well," replied Louise; "you may think as you choose of her, but you can't influence the thoughts of other people, and she can't get into the first society if she tries."

"She doesn't try, nor does she wish to," said the other, a little indignant at the way in which Louise was talking; "but there are others besides our family who think as much of her as we do, and they are worthy people, too."

"Well, I know that; but do you know she came near making difficulty between Mr. and Mrs. Burke when they were first married, because she remained there; and Mr. Burke advised her to, when they both knew she was not wanted? It was all accidental, too, her leaving at last."

Mr. Lee saw that the conversation was taking rather an unpleasant turn, and interrupted it by saying,

"You will have a beautiful evening for your ride, Miss Doxtater, but I must decline accompanying you, for reasons which I assure you are sufficient, but which I do not choose to name."

"I suppose then I must excuse you from necessity," replied Louise. "But speaking of the country, recalls a bit of news I have for you, Minnie. Do you recollect the minister who preached in the little church you attended, the summer you spent in the country?"

"Mr. Ashton, you mean. O, yes, I recollect him. Well," said Minnie, "he is n't dead, is he?"

"No, indeed! but don't be in too great a hurry, you can't guess what I have to tell you. He received a call to preach in a church in Boston, at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year, and left his old place last week. Miss Julia Hapwood is my authority; she admired his preaching so much that she went every Sunday to hear him, and she says the whole country around there are feeling dreadfully about his leaving."

"He is an intimate friend of mine," said Mr. Lee; "my counselor while I was in college. His prospects are really very flattering. He called upon me on his way to Boston, and told me of his success."

"He is an own cousin of mine," said Louise, "and I feel quite proud of him."

"And you have every reason to," said the other.

"But he does n't favor us with much attention," continued Louise; "I suppose it is because we are too wicked to suit him."

"He would have preferred to remain at his little church in the country; he did not accept the call from choice," said Mr. Lee.

"Foolish fellow!" replied Louise, "what could he have been thinking of!"

"He thought he might be as useful in his old situation; besides he could not, willingly, break the relation between pastor and people when the people were as united as his seemed to be, in their attachment to him; but his salary was small, and he felt it to be his duty to accept the offer of a larger one, even at the sacrifice of his personal feelings, on the account of his father and sister, who are dependent upon him; and he tells me he has not yet been able to settle his college expenses."

"We all loved him very much," said Minnie, "and we only saw him a few times."

"Loved him," repeated Louise; "just think what a confession you are making, Miss Minnie."

"No more than I am willing to," replied the other; "we *did* love him, as a pastor, and as a friend, and as a gentleman, too."

"His friendship is to be valued highly," remarked Mr. Lee. "He was a correspondent of mine in the years I spent in the East Indies, and his letters I preserve with the greatest care, for they are calculated to benefit whoever may read them."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

One dark, raw night in November, Helen heard the door of her room opened carefully. It was long past midnight, and she started with alarm—but immediately she heard Minnie's well-known voice, saying,

"It is I, Helen, don't be frightened."

"What is the matter, Minnie?" she asked, not a little surprised at her unseasonable call.

"O, I don't know," replied the other, "but I can't sleep at all. I have been very restless all night, and my bones ache, and I feel very chilly."

Helen lighted a lamp, and a glance at Minnie's face told her that all was not well. The deep red of her cheeks betrayed the presence of fever, and when she laid her hand upon her forehead, her flesh was of a burning heat.

"Come back to your room," said she, "you will take cold here, and I will stay with you."

Minnie once more tried to sleep after Helen had bathed her heated temples, but she was restless, and kept constantly asking for water.

"Minnie," said Helen, when she saw how useless were all her efforts to sleep, "when did you first feel this?"

"To-night," she replied; "I think I took cold at the concert; one of the windows was open, and the wind blew across my neck, and I have not felt warm since."

"Did n't you know it was very dangerous to sit in a draft of air? why did n't you change your seat?"

"Yes, I knew it very well, but it was crowded, and I did n't see any other place."

"Then you should have come away. You would have better lost the music than to have taken such a cold."

"Had I gone with Will I should have done so, but I did not like to ask Mr. Lee to come away, he seemed to be enjoying the singing so much, and we don't hear such fine singers often. O how parched my lips are!"

When the morning began to dawn, Minnie remarked, "I did not think a night was half as long as this one has been; how glad I am to see the daylight. I am sorry to have kept you up, Helen, but I could n't bear to stay alone. I think you should try to get a little sleep now. I sha'n't be as lonely as I was when it was dark."

"I had had a fine sleep before you came to me," replied Helen; "and I do not wish for more; do not ask me to leave you."

"O, you are so kind, Helen. I did n't want to wake mother. She is n't strong enough to sit up. What would I have done without you." She took Helen's hand in hers and kissed it affectionately.

During two days there was little change in her disease. Her mother sat by her bedside the greater part of the time, and her father and Will came often to her room to cheer her with their ever enlivening presence, while Helen left nothing undone which could in the least promote her comfort. Doctor Duval expressed no anxiety in regard to his patient, and the family felt none.

On the third night of Minnie's illness, Helen was sitting alone beside her. She had been urged to go to rest, but she could not be induced to leave Minnie to the care of another. She knew how to trace the

course of disease by symptoms, and had observed an occasional rolling of the eyes of the invalid which somewhat excited her fears. Once or twice she thought her mind wandered, but when spoken to, she appeared perfectly rational, and Helen communicated her fears to no one. About midnight Minnie raised her head, and looking earnestly around the room, said, in an under tone,

"Do you hear the discord?"

"What did you say?" said Helen.

"Don't speak so loud, you will be heard," she replied. "I asked if you detected the discord."

"What do you mean?" again inquired Helen.

"Why, the bass does n't accord at all; can't you see that it don't," said Minnie.

"Minnie," said Helen, seeing that she was really wandering, and hoping by the sound of her name to rouse her to consciousness; "Minnie, does your head ache?"

"No, it 's in my ear, is n't it in yours?" she replied, and then starting, as if surprised, she asked, "Who are you?"

Helen pulled the bell-cord which hung near the bed; its sound seemed doubly loud at that still hour, and in a moment Mr. and Mrs. White, and Betty, had answered the summons.

"She seems to be delirious," said Helen, stepping to the door to meet them. "Come in quietly."

Minnie kept constantly talking, sometimes incoherently, but generally her expressions were distinct, though unmeaning. John was sent in great haste for Doctor Duval, but though he went with the utmost possible speed, and the doctor did not in the least delay his coming, the moments seemed like hours to those who, trembling with alarm, watched the sufferer.

"It is just what I expected," said the doctor to Mr. White, who met him at the door, and began stating the case, and whose every word was full of anxiety, while his appearance manifested great alarm. The doctor continued, "Don't be so troubled, it is common."

He seemed unusually calm while looking at Minnie, and timing her pulse, and giving directions to Helen in regard to the necessary treatment.

"Your weeping may injure her," said he to the parents, who were close beside her. "Perhaps it would be better if you should sit a little out of her sight."

It was hard to go away from her. She seemed dearer to them now than she had ever before; but her welfare demanded it, and they did as the doctor had advised. Helen took Minnie's hands, which she was inclined to throw wildly about, and rubbed them gently, and she seemed quieted, a moment, by the action, then drew them away and threw them about as wildly as before. For several days she failed rapidly. She gave no look of recognition to any, nor spoke one affectionate word, and hope was fast dying in the breasts of those loving friends. It was the Sabbath. Will could no longer endure the sad stillness which reigned throughout his home, and he sought the office, where he knew he should find his friend, Harry, alone.

"I could not stay and see her die," said he, as he opened the door; "it is more than I could bear. Did she know me, I would sit by her till the last breath was gone, but I can not see her so; it is no comfort!"

Harry asked no questions. Will's remark had told him all he wished to know, and he replied,

"This is indeed a mysterious dispensation of Providence, but I am not yet without hope. Doctor Duval speaks quite encouragingly of her case."

"I know he does n't give her up yet, but I can't see the reason why. She is a dear, good sister; how can I part with her," said the agonized brother. "I love her, Harry, you can not know how well."

"True," replied the other; "I never had a sister, but I have seen enough of Minnie to learn how pleasant it might be to have so lovely a companion. Had I been blesed with a sister's love, and had I from childhood associated with one like her, I think I should have been better myself. I can see that I have lost much by this want."

"But you have also gained much. You can never feel the agony of losing her," said Will.

Harry made no reply. He was unwilling to tell how strongly his affections were fastened upon the one whom Will called by the endearing appellation of sister; unwilling to tell how heavily the hours had dragged since he heard of her illness; and how he longed, once more, to look upon her face, and to hear her voice, even though the expressions might be prompted by a wandering mind.

Harry felt that hidden grief was doubly dreadful to endure. Will found a momentary relief in pouring his sorrows into the ear of his sympathizing friend; and Harry's first impulse was to unburden his own heart, and mingle his tears with those of the weeping brother. He had never declared his love, and he determined, if the object of it was then torn away from earth and from his sight forever, to bear his griefs alone.

"I can not stay here in this suspense," said the other, after a short pause; "let us both go to the house, and hear if any change has taken place."

It was just at the close of evening service, and as the two went on their mournful errand, they passed crowds of the young, whose faces shone brightly with the

glow of health, and who lent not a single thought to the article of death. How, like a very mockery, did their cheerful smiles, and happy voices, seem to the sad ones! As they entered the house, Harry discovered Franky May sobbing, violently, in a distant corner of the parlor, and Louise Doxtater standing, tearless, and, apparently, unmoved, near the door. He could have waited by the weeping Franky had she not seemed striving to hide herself, but he could not brook to see the soulless Louise, and he passed silently on with Will to his room.

"Sit down," said Will, "while I go and see how she is."

Doctor Duval was in the room when they entered, and his quick eye was not slow to read the expression of anxiety which rested upon Harry's features. He had suspected that he loved, when he called at the office to inquire after the sufferer, and suspicion then became certainty. He had felt the same, and he knew how powerful to comfort would be a sympathizing word, and taking Harry's arm, he said, "I have known it all."

Like an electric shock, could it reach the soul, did those words send a thrill through that young lover's heart.

"I know," continued the other, "what a satisfaction it must be to look upon the loved one's face, and it shall not be denied to you."

Then drawing him gently, he led him to the door of Minnie's room. It was open, and through it, Harry gazed earnestly upon her. He was unobserved; for all present thought of nothing but the sufferer. Will was sitting upon the bedside, holding her thin, white hand against his lips, and her deep blue eyes were fixed upon him. There was no wildness in that look. Her tangled curls were thrown back upon the pillow, and

her face, white as marble, was beautiful, death-like as it seemed. Suddenly a smile came over the before still features, but it passed away, and the eyes slowly closed.

"There 's a change," said the doctor, hurriedly, as he dropped Harry's arm, and approached the bed. "The crisis is passed, and the gentle closing of those eyes gives me new hope." As he put his ear close to her face, and heard her regular though faint breathing, that hope was reflected, brighter and brighter, from his countenance, and inspired all present.

"She sleeps," he said, at length; "consciousness is restored; but the worn physical nature is hardly able to retain the little life that remains, and upon the care she receives to-night, hangs life or death. Strength is all that is needed."

As Harry walked with Will back to his room, he whispered in his ear, "This is an hour when you may easily learn to pray."

Through the long watches of that night, Helen wet the lips of the invalid with a reviving liquid; and when the gray light of the morning crept in through the window-shutters, those lips parted to receive the offered nourishment. When her eyes first opened, they rested upon a beautiful rose, and she smiled. It was one Will had placed upon her pillow, by Harry's request. She seemed conscious that it was the gift of love, but she was ignorant of the birth-place of that love. Like the rain-drops to the drooping flower, was that smile to those sinking hearts. Like the Saviour's voice to the deaf man, was her first rational whisper to those waiting ones who were standing around the sufferer.

All night long the doctor, too, had been a watcher; not of her whose breath came so feebly, but of that tireless friend, whose unceasing faithfulness made her

the earthly giver of that breath; not of her whose life seemed wholly committed to their care, but of her who risked her own life, and complained not of fatigue, if she might but aid to save the helpless one.

Day by day Minnie gained health and strength, and in a few weeks mingled, as she had been accustomed, with her friends. But she was dearer to them now; the fear of losing her had made her more precious, and the sorrow they had felt at the thought of her loss, had taught them how indispensable she was to their happiness.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was past the business hours. Mr. White was sitting alone by a warm fire in his counting-room, examining the result of the inventory which had just been taken of his goods, and comparing expenditures with receipts, preparatory to making arrangements for the spring importations. A very comfortable feeling had taken possession of him, such as every merchant experiences when receipts greatly overbalance disbursements, and the standing capital is suddenly swelled by thousands. This feeling always adds a relish to the choicest viands, and wakens all the goodness of the tradesman's human nature.

Just as Mr. White had completed this examination, and was taking up the evening *Journal*, Harry Lee entered.

"Don't let me interrupt you," said he, "I will wait until you are at leisure."

"No interruption at all," replied Mr. White, feeling in his very best mood. "I am glad you have come. Let me see," he continued, "this is your first call at my room here, is it not?"

"It is, sir, and I should not have presumed to interrupt you now, but I wished to see you alone," said Harry.

"Have not been getting into any difficulty, I hope," said Mr. Lee, jestingly.

"Yes sir, I have; and a pretty serious matter it bids fair to be," replied Harry; "I think it may influence, greatly, all my future life."

"What is it?" asked Mr. White, undecided whether to consider his young friend in earnest or not.

"I hardly know how to introduce the subject," said the other; "I have been three months pleading cases at law, but I am unpracticed in this business. Do you suspect me?" he asked, looking earnestly at Mr. White.

"I do not," replied the gentleman; "but if you find it such a difficult matter to introduce the subject, consider that done, and go on to its discussion."

Harry Lee was not a man to try by arts or cunning to accomplish his wishes, and with the dignified boldness which was characteristic of him, he said,

"Mr. White, I have known your daughter, personally, nearly a year, and longer by reputation, and through her letters to Will, while at college. To me, to know her has been to love her; but I consider it my duty, before making any such declaration to her, to obtain your permission to win her love in return, if I am able; and to secure that permission, or the refusal of it, I have called to-night."

Both were for a while silent, when Mr. White replied,

"This is unexpected by me, but the honorable course you have taken can not pass unnoticed. I thank you for the regard you have manifested for my wishes, and this alone would be a strong inducement to me to give you my consent. But is not this unlike you? I learned from your uncle that you are not easily influenced, and that you never act hastily."

"I have not acted hastily," said the other. "When I read the affectionate letters which she wrote to Will, little thinking that any eye but his should see them, I learned to love her as I saw her there; and a year's acquaintance with her has only strengthened and matured that love."

"But you are young," replied Mr. White; "you may meet prettier faces, and those whom you will love better than you do Minnie. You have not seen half the world yet, and she is not a young lady in any thing but age; she is as simple as a little child."

"And that simplicity is what I admire," remarked the young gentleman. "I have seen just enough of the world to teach me what it is, and to banish all desire to gain its friendship. In the love of one so free from all its vanity and deceit I shall be happy, and in that love alone."

Harry Lee was growing bold in urging his suit, and hope was the secret of his boldness. There was nothing in Mr. White's manner which threatened refusal, and he no longer feared it.

"Are you sure," said Mr. White, at length, looking searchingly at Harry, "that the fortune, of which you consider her an equal heir, has not influenced you in your decision."

"I only ask your daughter," replied he, the deep color for a moment mounting to his face. "I ask for nothing more; you mistake me if you think I sue for gold."

"You have," continued Mr. White, "always had the assistance of your father in pecuniary matters, but now you have entered upon the practice of your profession, and are starting for yourself. You have no idea of what it costs to live, and are you not hasty in thinking of adding an incumbrance with which you may so easily dispense? Should I tell you that I design to make my son my only heir, would you not change your conclusion? You know, too, the report is current that you are the favorite of Miss Doxtater, and it is well known that her father has already settled upon her half of his fortune. That fact should influence you in your decision. Mon-

ey, my young friend; is the great good to be obtained in these days."

Harry Lee's pride was touched, and had he been capable of unmanliness he would have been unmanly then, but he answered coolly,

"I have not found it so."

"Your experience amounts to little more than a cipher," said Mr. White. "You have never, for a moment, known the want of money, nor have you learned the difficulty of obtaining it. A few hundred thousand dollars would add considerable to the worth of a wife."

"But if all her worth lay in the dollars, both would be valueless to me," said Harry.

"I have seen more years than you, my friend," replied Mr. White, leaning back his chair, and throwing his arm affectionately over the great pile of ledgers and day-books he had been examining; and in advising you I shall dispute Paul's assertion to his young friend, Timothy, that 'the love of money is the root of all evil.' People have learned that it is best to take the money, and run the risk of the evil. Miss Doxtater's fortune is not to be despised."

"You do me—" but before the word "injustice" had passed his lips, Harry Lee ceased from speaking.

"Pardon me, then," said Mr. White, suspecting what the sentence, if completed, would have been. "Believe me, I have the highest respect and regard for you, and this is why I have endeavored to undeceive you, if, perhaps, you were deceived; but if,—after I tell you frankly that Minnie can receive but a small portion of my property, if any,—you do not withdraw your request, with her mother's consent, you may be sure of mine."

Perhaps it was ungenerous in Mr. White thus to question the motives of one so noble as was Harry

Lee, and, doubtless, when he heard his manly confession of disinterested affection for the one he sought, he regretted the course he had taken; but the act was characteristic of the lover of wealth. He has learned the value of gold. He has tasted the pleasure it brings, and he knows how powerful it is to attract.

Though it was now late, Harry Lee that night spent a long time alone with Mr. and Mrs. White, at their home, and when he left he had learned a fact, of which all the other admirers of sweet Minnie White were ignorant; and the knowledge of it made him thoughtful. But he had secured the favor he went to ask, and in his thoughtfulness he was happy.

Another evening, and Minnie White and Harry Lee sat side by side upon the sofa.

No stranger's ear was near to catch their earnest words, and no other eyes to see the deep blush which mantled the maiden's cheeks, or to admire the clustering curls which hung so carelessly down on her bosom. Minnie had entered that room, on this occasion, full of life and gayety to meet her friend; but when Harry took her hand within his own she had no wish to withdraw it. Before his lips pronounced the sentence, "Minnie, I love you," she had inferred as much, and, dropping her head modestly down, her luxuriant curls, like thoughtful helpers, gathered thick around her face and hid her answering blushes. Again pressing her hand he repeated the assertion, "Minnie, I love you," and added, "can you love me in return?"

Minnie was a novice in affairs of love, except as her heart was open to receive the whole world. But Harry's declaration had awakened a kindred feeling in her breast which had long nestled there, and which she had been cherishing, though she knew it not; and when the question was urged the second time, she re-

plied, half-raising her eyes, with her accustomed frankness,

"I did not know it *before!*"

If Harry had admired her frankness and affectionate spirit when manifested in the scenes and loves of every day, he now admired them more than ever, when, forgetting all the vain, unmeaning excuses and objections that heartless maidens make to those who offer love, she affected not to hide a truth which could not be concealed.

As Harry placed upon the hand he held the golden circle, which was the emblem of their mutual unending attachment, a new charm was added to his life; for the heart which had from early boyhood been wrapping its warmest affections within itself, and had grown almost an isolated thing, from the want of a kindred heart, now lived in woman's love.

Love is a strange, mysterious thing. It leads man blindfold at its will, but he who most loves has most of happiness.

CHAPTER XXXV.

It was very late. The watchmen were at their posts, and their measured tramp as they passed and repassed, could be distinctly heard. It was a cold and cheerless night, such a night as is common when the spring thaws begin to come; a night when the wind finds every crevice in the shattered dwellings of the poor, and when the rain creeps in unfeelingly upon the inmates.

Harry Lee had laid aside his book, and was sitting by a comfortable fire, half yielding to the call to rest, yet possessing hardly energy enough to move. Suddenly there was a light rap upon the door, but he hesitated to open it, wondering who this unseasonable visitor might be, when a female voice said,

"Please to let me in."

He obeyed, and a slender woman appeared before him. Her dress was scant and thin, and the drops of rain fell from her close hood upon her thread-bare shawl. It was evident she had not come for food or shelter; and, touched with pity, the young lawyer slipped his hand into his pocket; but before the coin which he had taken in his fingers had been withdrawn, she said,

"Forgive me, sir. The love of my children has driven me here."

Her voice trembled, and she stopped a moment, when Harry inquired,

"What has sent you out at this late hour? You are

in danger of being taken by the watch; you should have waited until morning."

"O, sir!" she replied, her sobs choking her utterance. "In the morning I shall be taken to the court, and I have no one to speak for me, and I can not speak for myself. I am afraid I shall be sent to prison, and then, O! what will become of my poor children!"

"Tell me your story," said the other, who saw plainly that an honest heart prompted every word.

"I have been stealing," she replied, looking suspiciously behind her, as if she feared other ears might hear her confession; "but, sir, it was no sin."

"It is always a sin to steal," said the other, calmly; "but tell me what did you steal?"

"Money," replied the woman, bursting into tears.

"How much?" again inquired Harry.

"Seventy dollars," said she. "I was detected before I was half way home, but, on account of my little child's sickness, they left me till morning; and now I have come to see if you will speak for me in court. Maybe I could say something myself; but Squire Doxtater is against me, and I can not, for I know him to be so hard with poor people."

"Sit down," said the other, placing a chair near the fire for her, "and let me hear your story, and then I can tell better what can be done for you."

She had found it no easy task to come, undiscovered, through the broad streets and dark lanes which lay between the little garret which she called her home, and the office she had just entered. More than once she had been obliged to conceal herself, to escape the notice of the policeman; and now, though she was safe from all such fears, she trembled, and sometimes started at the sound of her own voice. But her confidence in the young lawyer was increasing, and she began far

back in her history to relate the cause of her transgression.

"I was not always poor," she said. "I had a husband a year ago. He was a hard-working mechanic, a kind man, and on his wages we lived very comfortably. He was a fireman, and was often out late, and in cold storms, working to save burning buildings. It was too hard for him, and the night before he designed to leave the company, the wholesale grocery store on the corner of —— and —— streets took place. The fire was in the roof, near the chimney, and could not be reached by the engine, so my husband went upon the building, and poured water upon the fire, from buckets which were handed him from below. When it was out, and he started to come down, the ladder was wet, and his foot slipped the first step he took upon it, and he fell to the ground. He only lived two days after;" and here the relator buried her face in her hands and wept.

At length, drying her tears, the stranger continued: "He left me with two little children, one of them a very sickly child, which needed all my care. I was not willing to go to the poor-house, and I tried to earn enough to support myself and little ones by washing; but I am not strong, and through the winter I was able to make but little besides my rent. Often we were hungry and cold. O, sir!" she said, again bursting into tears, "you know but little what poor people suffer. Twice, when I had nothing to give my children to eat, I went to the grocer, and told him how my husband was killed in trying to save his store, and asked him to have pity upon me; but he said it was a fireman's business, and he was not to blame if my husband was careless; and I went away without assistance. Then I used to pray, and hoped better times would come; but I only grew poorer and poorer, till I gave up praying.

"Driven to desperation, I determined yesterday to go once more to the grocery, and beg for assistance. When I went in, the keeper looked very cross at me, and sat down by his desk to count some money. I spoke once or twice, but he paid no attention to what I said, and went on counting his money. He had laid the bills in several piles, with some silver pieces upon them, to keep them from being misplaced. All at once he dropped a piece of money, which rolled under the desk, and he stooped to find it. While he was stooping, I drew two or three bills from one of the piles, and walked away. I thought it belonged to me, for the whole store would have been burned and been lost to him, if my husband had not put out the fire. He missed the money a moment after I left, and followed me with a policeman, and to-morrow I must be tried."

The tears which occasionally gathered in the listener's eyes were not unobserved by the woman, who spoke bolder and easier as she added an account of her sufferings.

"It was no sin to take the money, I am sure it was not. It is not sin for me to use any means to save my starving children, and the God who planted a mother's love in my breast will hold me guiltless."

There was that in the woman's language which bespoke no limited degree of intelligence, and in her story enough to rouse the deepest sympathies of which the young lawyer was capable, and he had not the heart to oppose her assertion that she was "sinless."

After learning from her the name of the grocer, and of the captain of the fire-company of which her husband had been a member, and receiving directions where to find her home, Harry promised to be present in court on the following morning, and she went back, through the wild, pitiless storm, to her little ones.

The account of the widow's misfortune had driven all sleep from Harry Lee's eyes, and the remainder of the night was spent in preparation for the defense he had determined to undertake, and at daybreak he was gathering additional evidence from those to whom he had been referred. He found more than one ready to confirm the truth of her statement, and a visit to her wretched habitation nerved him to his work.

The court-room was crowded—not by those who had come to learn the widow's fate, or to offer a word to mitigate her sentence, but by a throng which curiosity had gathered, to hear the dispute of two wealthy men who were at variance.

The widow sat erect in the prisoner's box, and many thought her careless and unrepentant of her sin; but no! she saw her promised benefactor there, and hope was high within. The grocer sat near, and eyed her with an angry scowl, and then settled back in his seat while an expression of satisfaction came over his countenance, for he was feeding upon revenge.

The judge sat listlessly while the testimony of the grocer was taken, and while Mr. Doxtater urged the guilt of the widow in terms which fall harshly upon the ear of suffering woman, and the blood in young Lee's veins boiled while he listened to his heartlessness and injustice.

"Have you any thing to say," inquired the judge of the prisoner, "why the sentence of the law should not be passed upon you?"

At this moment Harry Lee arose and said,

"*Sir*," for he could not brook the words "*Your Honor*," "I am here to say a few words in behalf of the prisoner whom you are about to sentence."

"I object," shouted Mr. Doxtater.

"The *law* governs," replied young Lee, with calm

decision; "and the prisoner must be heard in reply to the question put by the court."

The judge settled back into his chair after having decided the right of this claim, but not into the listlessness he had before manifested.

Harry Lee's practice had never before called him to perform so public a duty, and excitement and anxiety paled his cheek, while the just indignation which the scene had aroused made him bold. His voice was at first low and gentle, but his eloquence was entrancing, and every ear in the assembly caught each word he uttered, and it found its way deep into the heart. Then that voice grew louder, and firmer, as he exposed the injustice and partiality of the former proceedings, and repeated the story of the fireman's death, and finally appealed to their sympathies by the tale of the widow's woe.

The grocer writhed, and sat uneasily in his chair, and Mr. Doxtater frowned and bit his lips in anger, while the widow smiled; but hers was not a smile which betrayed defiance to suffering or sin, but which had its birth in a thought of righteousness.

He did not plead for pardon. The law had been broken, and its demands must be answered. He acknowledged the justice of this, but he urged the mildest penalty imposed for the offense. His appeal was effectual. The passionate harangue of Mr. Doxtater was powerless, and the judge's finger, which had rested upon the word "imprisonment" in the statute-book, slipped down to a petty fine.

The widow's heart, for a moment, sank when she heard this sentence, but it was but for a moment. Harry Lee knew her poverty, and approaching the clerk's desk, placed the required nominal sum of money upon it, and turning to the widow, whose eyes were

then filled with tears for the first time since she entered the court-room, he said, "Go, but sin no more."

The scene had not been without effect upon the crowd who had witnessed it; and as the noble-hearted youth walked toward the door, behind her whom he had so justly befriended, every eye followed him, with a look of admiring approval, which was exchanged for one of the most perfect contempt, as they again rested upon the grocer.

"You must give up all idea of pleasing Harry Lee," said Mr. Doxtater to Louise, as he that day sat down, with little appetite, before a sumptuous dinner.

"Why, father! what do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean," said the other, "the matter is settled, and he is left with a poor opinion of us."

"I hope you haven't done any thing to vex him, have you?" again asked Louise.

"No, not to vex him," replied her father; "but we clashed in a suit to-day."

"And you were successful?" interrupted Louise. "I declare I'm sorry."

"No, indeed; but he placed my client and me in a most uncomfortable position in court. It was in Jane's trial. You recollect I told you we permitted her to remain with her children last night, after the hour for the police to be out, thinking it perfectly safe; but, somehow or other, she managed to secure him for her counsel, but I knew nothing of it, and I undertook to dispose of her case rather summarily. It was my business, of course, to do the best I could for my client, and not thinking I should be opposed, I made short and rather careless work of it. Just as the Judge was going to sentence her, Lee rose to speak for her. I tried to disconcert him by objecting, but he was not to be trapped by that. He made speedy, but certain

destruction of my work, secured the imposition of a mere nominal fine upon Jane, and then came forward *and paid it himself!*"

"How provoking!" exclaimed Louise. "You know you mortally offended young Boutillier, just as I had about determined to go to Paris and live; but I'll send for Mr. Lee to eat ice-cream with me to-morrow evening, and I'll join his side."

"He is a keen fellow," replied her father, making a constant ringing upon a tumbler with his fork; "you'll find it difficult work to manage him. This is a fortunate affair for him; for it is just the kind of a story to be caught up by every body. You'll have to give him up, Louise. I declare you seem to be mighty unfortunate with your beaux: as soon as you get your mind made up to take them, they are off."

"I'll show you what I'll do one of these days," said Louise, her face flushed with a feeling of injured pride.

"You'll have to be about it," continued her father; "you've been in the market some time; you must look out you don't get unsalable."

"I seem to have unlucky help," replied Louise, a little angrily; to which Jack added the comforting assurance, that she "need n't feel so bad about the matter, for Mr. Lee never did fancy her, and never would;" and then congratulated himself upon the fact, that "there was but one daughter in the family to be disposed of."

"Don't be in a hurry, Master Jack," continued Louise, her temper gaining the mastery over her judgment, "you may not get rid of me as soon as you hope."

"I confess, I'm afraid we sha'n't," replied the brother. "When a girl gets the name of a flirt, as you have, she is generally no longer transferable property in the hands of her parents."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The little piazza, upon the back of Mr. White's house, was a favorite resort for Helen. She loved retirement, and often stole away from the presence of the family to sit there alone, and enjoy the evening air and summer starlight, while holding converse with her own thoughts.

Thought is a great well-spring of our happiness, and they who never hold communion with that sweet companion within, rob life of one of its richest charms. We may dwell upon the history of the past, and from it draw great lessons for the future; we may stretch our sight beyond the vail which hides from view all coming years, and revel in their untried scenes; or we may ponder those truths which reflect wisdom, and which expand the mind, strengthen the affections, and purify the heart. Thought molds the life of man, and they who never school their thoughts, like a ship without a rudder, float helplessly down the stream of time, blown carelessly about by the slightest breeze of circumstance.

> "Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which
> Men are, and ought to be accountable."

Unschooled thoughts flit through the mind, leaving but vague impressions of their presence, and, ere long, become chainless as the ebbing tide, while that great source of happiness which nature has placed in every breast is wasted.

It was a lovely evening in the early summer, an evening when daylight seemed reluctant to cling to its great source, and, with him, to leave the spots which it had cheered, but seemed to hang stealthily back, shedding a delightful beauty over nature.

Helen had left the cheerful company in the drawing-room, and stood leaning against one of the pillars of the piazza. She was deaf to all sound save the music of her own heart, which fell sweetly upon her mental ear, and was unconscious of the approach of any person until a hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a voice whispered:

"May I join you?"

She roused from her reverie, and looking behind her, saw clearly, by the light of the evening, the intruder, whose voice she had before recognized as that of Doctor Duval. In her agitation she forgot to answer, and, drawing the light shawl which hung upon her shoulders more closely about her, turned to enter the house.

"Don't go, pray don't," said the other, in a beseeching tone of voice; "why do you try to shun me?"

"I have already been here some time. I did not try to shun you," she replied, hardly conscious of what she was saying.

"Stay, then, a moment longer, and hear me," said he; "I am wretched, I am miserable, Helen; do stay and hear me."

Doctor Duval had passed middle life, but the appearance of youth had not yet left him. Among his black curling locks a few gray hairs were scattered, but none who knew him believed them marks of age, and the silvery lines were so sparsely strewn that few discovered them. Year after year Helen had met him almost daily, but at every meeting the vail of mystery

which hung about him had grown more impenetrable. His face had never worn a calm complacent expression when in her presence, but his piercing, troubled look had been to her a constant source of annoyance; and, with the greatest reluctance she remained beside him.

"You have seen me often, Helen," said he, when he saw that she complied with his request; "and you have not failed to see that I am unhappy. I know you have a heart to pity." His voice trembled, not less with excitement than feeling, and he continued, "You alone can make me happy, and you must not, you can not refuse to do it."

"You talk very strangely," said Helen, not less agitated than he; "don't say any more, I beg of you."

"I must," replied the doctor. "I must tell you that I love you, and I have, ever since the first time I saw you, and I am determined to make you mine."

"You are beside yourself," said Helen; "you do not know what you are saying."

"I do," said the other; "and had I said it long ago I might have escaped months of wretchedness. Helen, tell me, will you be mine?" and he placed his arm around the waist of the trembling girl as if certain of her consent, but pushing it away quickly, she replied:

"It never can be."

"Think," said the doctor, "think a moment, do not be so hasty."

"It does not require a single moment's thought; it can never be," she replied.

"Upon your answer," continued the doctor, "depends my happiness or misery, and will you not give it a moment's reflection?" Then folding his hands, he walked silently up and down the piazza. At length he approached her, and asked her in a calmer voice,

"What answer now, Helen?"

"I was decided before," she replied; "and you, sir, are not conscious what you are saying; I am certain you are not."

"Why do you think so?" he continued; "is it because you think nature gave me a heart destitute of affections, and that I can not love? If so, you have not learned me well."

"I acknowledge I have not. It has been impossible. You have always appeared so strange," replied Helen, anxious to evade the former part of the question.

"No," he continued, in a soliloquizing tone, "it is not true. I can love—I have loved—and will you crush a heart which has so long been miserable! think again."

After a short pause, Helen said, calmly,

"Doctor, I am but a common servant-girl, poor and almost friendless, and one in my humble circumstances can not expect the notice of one in your position; and you are unconscious of what you say when you offer me your love."

"I have enough," replied the doctor, "but it fails to afford me happiness. Wealth is vanity, it can never satisfy the heart. I have tried it until more than half my days are wasted in the vain effort, but I freely offer all I possess if you will share it with me. Tell me, then, is there any reason why we may not live and be happy together?"

"You are inconsiderate," said Helen. "Without congeniality of feeling, and mutual sympathy, there can not be happiness, and we are very different."

"No, I trust not," replied the other; "every wish and thought of yours I will gladly make my own; we are not so very different."

"In hopes, enjoyments, and feelings," continued Helen, "we certainly disagree; and it is not within our

power to change our character at will; will is strong, but its power is not absolute."

"Helen," he asked, calmly, "will you add another ingredient to the cup of misery from which I must continually drink?"

"I am not doing it," she replied. "I have never sought your affection, and it is not duty to sacrifice my own happiness in this manner. Doctor Duval, I can never grant you this request; leave me, I beg of you, and do not speak of it again."

"Helen, be careful!" said he; "you do yourself a wrong."

She could not understand the meaning of this last sentence, nor did she wait to inquire, but sought retirement in her own room.

Scenes like this awaken peculiar thoughts, and whether we will or not, they cling to us. Vain, and worse than vain are all efforts to banish them, for each effort is a fresh reminder of them. But the words "You do yourself a wrong," weighed deepest upon Helen's mind. Did she wrong herself in not accepting the love of one she could neither love nor respect? Wrong herself in not accepting wealth, on conditions which her conscience and desires opposed? Wrong herself in utterly rejecting attentions she was determined at last to discard? No—she knew she did not, and to her the sentence was without meaning. It had been uttered with peculiar emphasis, but she could get no clew to its import.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Ah, Miss Helen!" exclaimed Will, as he appeared at the door of her room, holding a letter in his hand, "I see I have n't kept as close a watch of you as I should have done; but I am rather fortunate in detecting you in every thing you undertake. Come, I must know what this means," slipping his finger into the envelope, as if about to break the seal.

"I don't understand you," answered Helen.

He came a little closer, and displaying the name upon the letter, said, "Can you understand that?"

Helen saw that it was her own name, in a round, legible hand-writing, and extended her hand to take it.

"By no means," said he; "it is not advisable to let such things pass without investigation. I see, by the post-mark, the writer lives in Boston; and, since Yankees are so noted for their ingenuity, I shall be doubly careful in attending to this affair, and shall consider that I do well if I succeed in outwitting a Yankee."

"Come, Will," said Helen, with apparent indifference, "the letter is mine; let me see what is in it."

Her curiosity was really greatly excited; but she knew well the character of the person with whom she had to do, and she made no manifestation of her true feeling.

"My *sense of duty* must control me in this matter," he replied. "It is unpleasant for me to do it; but I long ago learned that I must sacrifice pleasure in very many instances;" and he cracked the seal which

guarded the strange secret that the letter contained.

"Will!" said Helen, with a threatening turn of the head; and he dropped the letter, as if by accident, at her feet. As she glanced at the name at its close, she colored, and a look of great surprise rested upon her countenance. She could not read it until her visitor was gone, for she was unwilling he should know its source; but he seemed determined upon remaining. She at length began sewing, apparently undesirous to peruse it; and he took up a little volume which lay upon her table, and appeared perfectly contented to wait her pleasure. At last, overcome by impatience, she said,

"Will, your society is very agreeable; I think your mother would enjoy it."

"I am very happy to hear it," he replied; "and I shall do myself the pleasure of remaining where I know it is appreciated."

"How provoking!" ejaculated Helen.

"What is it? have you pricked your finger?" exclaimed the other. "I am very sorry."

"No," she replied; "but I will be much obliged to you if you will postpone your visit a short time."

After giving her an assurance of the injustice of such ill-treatment, Will did as she had desired.

The letter was from Mr. Ashton, and read thus:

"Boston, ——

"Miss Helen Burke—You may be a little surprised to receive a communication from me; but I trust to your kindness to be excused for any seeming presumption.

"It is now four years since we first met in the little grave-yard in the country. You told me then that you

were almost friendless, and, from those who knew you, I learned more of your history. Then I pitied, but pity soon ripened into a deeper regard.

"I have made several previous efforts to communicate with you, which, I am almost confident, have failed, and of the reason of this I am not wholly ignorant.

"The sister, who has so long been my companion at home, has linked her heart with another, and I am deprived of her sweet association. Now, I want a companion with whom I may share my joys and my sorrows, upon whom I may lavish my affections, and who will not consider me unworthy of her love. The slight acquaintance which I had with you four years ago, was not insufficient to assure me, that every impulse of your heart could find an echo in my own, and poverty alone forbade me then to reveal to you the truth; but a kind Providence has smiled upon my efforts, and that objection is now removed. I, like you, am almost alone in the world; but I seek a friend in you, and offer, in return, the purest affections which can exist in my heart. Life may be brighter to us both, lightened by each other's love; and, as a pastor, I may be more successful in my labors, if encouraged by your co-operation.

"Please answer as soon as possible, and believe me,

Yours, truly,

"GEORGE ASHTON."

Years had rolled away since the pressure of the young clergyman's hand had left so strong an impression upon Helen's mind; but the heart has deep hiding-places, where it may preserve affections and impressions, which seem to be lost in forgetfulness, but which the tide of circumstances brings back again to light,

in all their freshness, and in more complete perfection. So did her heart give back what it had so long held in secret. And why was it? Their eyes had met in formal friendship, but had they whispered of a mutual interest awakened? Lip had answered lip in but formal recognition, and surely they had not been the betrayers! or is there a silent language between hearts? It may be that there is.

Heart-language is such as hearts only can know, and we may never explore the birthplace of their mutual love.

The thought of love, now, was unlike what it had been when introduced by Doctor Duval, for while she strove to banish it in the one instance, she found it sweet to cherish it in the other. Yes, Helen loved; but hers was not a love which had just burst into life; not a love which was begotten by selfish interest, and which dies when that interest ceases to be promoted by the sweet passion. No, it had been born in her breast when no thought of self could control; and it had been manifested in the happiness she had ever felt when she learned of the country pastor's success, while wholly unconscious that he bestowed one thought upon her.

Again and again did she peruse that letter, and the flame it had roused to new life, burned brighter and brighter at each perusal. Her poverty and humility did not appear to forbid her to receive and cherish the offered affection, for he who had offered it loved even these. He, too, had borne them, and he did not despise them in another. In the dark day of his own adversity he had learned to love her as a child of greater adversity, and in the brightness of the dawning prosperity he looked down with unchanged affection.

There is a purity in genuine love, and Helen welcomed it. To preach the Gospel, which had been her

comfort from childhood, and which was her hope for the future, was the mission he had chosen, and she reverenced it. Its holy influences controlled all his life, and she, too, sought to be governed by the same spirit. Could she then cherish one thought but that of acceptance? Certainly not, and the answer which John slipped so quietly into the post-office, the following evening, breathed of nothing else. Examine its contents, and know how she was willing to acknowledge her gratitude.

"Mr. Ashton—Your last letter is the only one I have ever received from you. I thank you for the kind remembrance of me, which it assures me you have cherished.

"The heart that has never felt the sweetness of the tie which binds kindred hearts; which has forgotten how confidingly it could once say father, and how sweet it was to breathe the words, my mother; which has no knowledge of a brother's or a sister's love, but which has been almost friendless through life, is slow to reject what you have offered to me. Mine is such a heart, and though I can now trust confidently the affections of those with whom I live, yet I know—and it is just, and I do not complain—that I hold but a second place in those affections. Poor you know me to be, yet, regardless of that, you are willing to love me. I am thankful for that love, and assure you that to reciprocate it will be to me a very delightful task.

"Helen Burke."

Helen's ever ready adviser, Mrs. White, was not ignorant of this correspondence, and this letter had not been sent without her approval. She rejoiced that Helen had secured the love of one so worthy of her,

and she felt assured that in her the young clergyman would find what he needed, a true and devoted companion, an able and discreet counselor.

It has been said that "this is a weeping world," and it may be true. Helen had been nourished by tears, but she would now have added, it is also a smiling world. The little grief-drop, when it leaves the eye, rushes rapidly past the home of smiles; the cheek so beautiful, wet with tears, is still more beautiful wreathed with smiles; and the heart which bursts at grief is equally sensible to joy. This, then, is a world of smiles and tears. Sometimes they are mingled, but Helen had drunk her share of misery, and her cup of life held no longer any thing but joys.

Life hath real joys. The happy face of the child, that delights in the first draught of existence, tells of real joy; and so pure are life's morning pleasures that they shed a cheering light over the darkest hours of later years. The settled look of calm cheerfulness which rests upon the countenance of the aged father, as he watches the success of those who have been his care for years, and in whose affectionate arms he is borne as he journeys to the tomb, reveals a joy which is earth-born, but which shall live, and be meet for the habitation of heaven.

Love is the completion of the happiness of heaven; but love's first-fruits are gathered "on this side Jordan," and the world is its birth-place. The soul hungers, and the highest happiness of mortals is to feed that soul. The invisible food upon which it is nourished "cometh down" to earth, and as the bliss of the better world, whence it cometh, shall be to satisfy those inner longings, the work, surely, is begun below.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It was the evening before Minnie White's wedding-day. There was a deeper flush than usual upon her cheek, and her young heart throbbed with unwonted quickness. The folding-doors between the parlors were thrown partly open, and the movements of the inmates plainly indicated that they were momentarily expecting guests. Presently Harry Lee entered, accompanied by an elderly gentleman, whom he introduced as his father. Minnie's heart throbbed still quicker, and the color on her face was still deeper when she saw him, and when Harry presented her to the stranger as the one whom he might address, on the following morning by the endearing title of daughter. The stranger kissed the brow of the agitated girl, and welcomed her to a daughter's place in his affections, while her unaffected "I thank you," revealed the truth that she not unwillingly accepted it. Under such circumstances the powers are quickened, and at the first glance Minnie learned every feature of Mr. Lee's face, and read much of his character.

"Rather a remarkable coincidence has come to light since I reached the city this afternoon," said Mr. Lee, when he had become engaged in conversation with Mr. and Mrs. White, and Minnie and Harry had forgotten all but each other.

"Any thing of importance?" inquired Mr. White.

"It is a thing which interests me considerably," replied the other; "and it may aid me in finding an old

friend, which I have been unable to do by inquiry. When I entered my son's room this afternoon, I saw, hanging against the wall, a portrait of two children, which was painted in India by an artist who spent a few months there for his health, and which belonged to the gentleman who aided me in making my first successful efforts in that trade. They are the portraits of his children. He removed to New York, and was about engaging in a more extensive business when he was lost at sea, on a voyage which he found it necessary to make in order to complete his arrangements."

"It is rather singular," said Mr. White. "How did your son come in possession of the picture?"

"His uncle purchased it at auction for him?" replied Mr. Lee. "I have made every effort to learn what became of the widow and children, but have entirely failed. I have repeatedly written to the lawyer who settled the estate, for information concerning them, but he has always professed an ignorance of them for which I consider him really blamable. Mrs. Lincoln was a woman illy calculated to depend upon herself, and I fear she may have suffered."

"Lincoln! Lincoln!" repeated Mr. White, thoughtfully, as if endeavoring to rouse some recollection of the person. "I don't believe I ever knew him."

"He was lost fifteen or sixteen years ago," said the other.

"O, that was before my coming to this city," replied Mr. White; "I thought I had never heard of him."

"Probably not," said Mr. Lee; "he spent but a short time in the city; his home, after his marriage, was in India. His was one of the loveliest families I ever knew," he continued, "and his elder daughter, Nellie, was a favorite of mine, and when I saw her face so perfectly to-day, it awakened very peculiar emo-

tions. I loved little Nellie Lincoln as I would have done an own daughter."

"Nellie Lincoln!" exclaimed Mrs. White, but she was quick to read a glance from her husband's eye, which showed that the same thought was in both their minds, which cautioned her about revealing it.

"Yes, or rather Helen Lincoln," answered Mr. Lee, and again Mr. White inquired,

"Did you know much of the parents?"

During this conversation Helen was sitting just the other side of the folding-doors, and every word which the stranger uttered reached her ear, and emotions deep as the soul's own interests wrung her soul. The name Nellie Lincoln was familiar to her, and one which was associated with her happiest days. But she overcame her desire to make herself known, and listened, to learn, if possible, something more concerning her parents, if indeed they were the persons referred to, and of the truth of this she had but little doubt. Had notice been taken of her countenance then, the observer would have witnessed a lively sporting of pallor and blushes, for, almost at the same moment it would be pale as the unblemished marble, and again crimsoned like the warm blood which coursed in her veins.

"I knew them well," said Mr. Lee, in reply to Mr. White's question; "and would have done any thing to aid them when in trouble. I fear the widow and children were not well provided for, for I am quite certain that the greater part of Mr. Lincoln's fortune was lost at the time his vessel was wrecked."

"There was then little or nothing left for them," continued Mr. White.

"Not really," replied the other; "but projects which Mr. Lincoln originated I have carried out, and they have proved most successful, and to his ingenuity

I am indebted for what I now possess; and this being the case, I really consider myself but a partner in the profits of my late undertakings, and could I have found the widow I should have considered it a duty to share them with her."

"The law would have released you from any thing of the kind," said Mr. White.

"But justice and my own conscience would have demanded it," replied Mr. Lee. "Established law and the law of right are not always the same, in my opinion; and one great reason why I have come to America is, to make more decided efforts to learn something of this family—to assist them, if they are living, and need assistance. But the lawyer who settled Mr. Lincoln's estate, wrote me that Mrs. Lincoln had left New York, and I am doubtful whether I can get any trace of them."

"A charitable errand, I think, Mr. Lee," remarked Mr. White.

"I object to the word charitable," replied the other, "and I sometimes reproach myself that I did not undertake it sooner. I could have done but little the first year or two, for the profits of the business did not appear immediately, and I myself was in but comfortable circumstances at the time of Mr. Lincoln's death. But I hope his family have not suffered, and that if I find them, it may prove that all has been well, and that we may enjoy our meeting much. Mrs. Lincoln," he continued, settling back into the great chair he was occupying, "was a sensitive woman, naturally, and very easily influenced by circumstances, and this sensitiveness was greatly increased by an affair which happened while she was at school. Mr. Ermstead, her father, was in business, and Mary, being motherless—"

"Mary Ermstead! Was her name Mary Erm-

stead?" exclaimed Mrs. White, who had been for some time a silent listener, starting from her chair, a look of great astonishment having taken possession of both her own features and those of her husband.

"Yes, Mary Ermstead; and after she was married she preserved her maiden name, and her younger child was named Mary Ermstead Lincoln; but tell me, why do you appear so surprised?"

"Singular, very!" said Mr. White, beginning to pace the room in a manner which excited the attention of all, and not offering to answer Mr. Lee's inquiry. "Singular, very!" he repeated.

The riddle of years was fast being solved.

Helen's excitement was becoming too intense to be longer concealed; and drawing from her finger the ring, which her mother had tied upon it when she was a child, and which her friend, the farmer, had carefully kept for her until she had grown large enough to wear it, she handed it to the stranger, pointing to the name, "Mary E. Lincoln," which was engraved upon the inside of it.

"Tell me whose is this, and where did *you* get it?" he exclaimed, eagerly.

"*My mother!*" was all the delighted girl could answer; and tears, such as few eyes are ever permitted to shed, ran down her cheeks.

"Nellie!" exclaimed he, seizing her hand, and beginning to catch the secret of the general surprise—"Nellie Lincoln! yes, I see that mother's face in yours; but where is she?"

There was a pause, then Helen answered, "*In heaven*," and turned away to conceal her emotions.

"John," said Mr. White, entering the kitchen. "Go to the office and say to Doctor Duval that I would like to see him immediately, in the library;" and, in a

short time Mr. and Mrs. White were engaged in earnest conversation with the doctor.

The web of mystery once broken, revelations roll out in quick succession. Of the truth that Helen was one of the family which Mr. Lee desired to find, there was not a single doubt; but another inquiry, of deeper interest to them, engaged the thoughts of Mr. and Mrs. White. To learn the reason of this, it is necessary to look back a moment into the history of the past.

Several years before Helen met Minnie in the market, and filled her little basket with strawberries, Mr. and Mrs. White left their home, in the delightful groves of Alabama, to visit New York. Their only daughter, then not four years old, was too frail to endure the fatigue of the voyage, and, before reaching the city of their destination, they mingled their tears with the waters of the ocean, to whose bosom they had committed the lifeless form of their little one. It were useless to attempt to describe the sorrow which wrung the hearts of those loving parents. They who have felt a like sorrow know what it is; and they who have not, may thank the great Ruler of their fortunes for this ignorance.

One of the first acquaintances which the visitors made in New York, was that of Doctor Duval; and the generous sympathy which he manifested, and felt for them, begat a mutual confidence and esteem. He saw how that mother's heart yearned for a child to love, and how a void, cheerless and painful, had been made in that father's breast. He, one day, brought with him, to visit them, a little girl very nearly the same age with their own. "She is an orphan, and entirely friendless," said he; "perhaps she might partially supply the place of the one you have lost." As Mrs.

White looked upon that bright little face which never received a mother's kiss, and at those little arms which had only a stranger's neck to clasp, and listened to that childish voice which was music to no ear, her heart turned involuntarily toward the little unfortunate.

This child was Mary Ermstead Lincoln!

Doctor Duval exercised great caution in this matter, and gave the child's name as Mary Ermstead, hoping, by this means, to remove all possibility of her parentage becoming known at any coming period. None, save the overseers of the Asylum from which she was taken, knew aught of this, besides the doctor; and his assurance that no person would ever appear to claim her, was all that Mr. and Mrs. White required.

Four years the little "grafted bud" was nourished in the genial air of Alabama, after which Mr. White established himself in the city of New York. Even those who might have known something of Mary Lincoln were slow to suspect that Minnie White was any other than the new merchant's daughter; and when Minnie wept, as she listened to the tale of Helen's misfortunes, and heard her sigh for the sister of whom she was unable to gain the least information, little did she think *she* had been a sharer in each of those misfortunes, and that the tears she shed moistened the lost sister's eyes.

Helen and Minnie had loved each other, but when they were that night clasped in each other's arms, new love, new emotions, which language is impotent to describe, filled their hearts. They were akin to those which the weeping Mary and Martha experienced when "he that was dead came forth," and which prompted Jairus, the ruler, to worship the despised Nazarene.

That Minnie was an adopted daughter Harry Lee

knew well. It was the secret he learned the evening he sought the interview with Mr. White in the counting-room, and here was the reason of those singular remarks in which that gentleman then indulged, and which so well-nigh disturbed the equanimity of the young attorney's temper.

Sweet Franky May shed a single tear when she learned that Minnie would not be, in reality, her sister, though she had consented *to be one* with the brilliant Will. At her suggestion the true sister stood in Franky's appointed place, beside the gentle bride of the following morning, when she took upon her the vow to love and cherish through life; and the thought of disappointment vanished at the sight of the happiness which had been so justly transferred to another.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"HELEN, may I talk with you a little while?" said Doctor Duval to her, as he turned to re-enter the door, after parting with the gay bridal company which had just left.

"Certainly, sir," she replied, for she had, for the time, lost all her aversion to him, since he had been the only person able to prove, to a certainty, that Minnie was indeed her sister, and as she sat down in the deserted parlor, she remarked with unusual emphasis, "This is the very happiest day of all my life."

"And will you not consent to make it such to me," said the doctor.

The hated subject was again forced upon Helen's mind, and her bitter feelings returned, doubly bitter in comparison with the delightful ones she had just been indulging, and she replied,

"I have told you once, and I can never change my answer."

Have you considered the matter?" again he asked.

"All that I ever shall," she answered, determinedly, and recollecting the interview on the piazza, she asked,

"Doctor, why did you say I did myself a wrong in refusing to comply with your request?"

"Because," said he, "I am in the possession of facts concerning you and your parents which would be of interest to you."

"Did you know, before now, that Minnie was my sister?" inquired Helen, looking reprovingly at him.

"I did," was his reply.

"And can you now ask me to love one who has willingly deprived me of happiness, which might have banished every dark hour of the years that are passed?"

Contempt, pride, and resolution, were plainly depicted upon Helen's countenance when she said this, and the look which she cast upon her visitor was such as he had never before met.

"Not willingly," he replied. "You judge me too hastily. Not willingly, Helen; the necessity has destroyed all my happiness; only hear me and exercise your unprejudiced judgment, and you can not censure."

"Pardon my rashness, then, and tell me all you know."

"It was my design when I sought this interview, but"—and knitting his eyebrows—evidently greatly agitated, he added, "it must reveal my deeper sin." Again his brow contracted, and an expression of fixed determination settled upon his features, and looking steadily upon the floor he began,

"I knew your mother when she was very young. You are like her, but adversity has cultivated more your decision of character, and experience has taught you to be more watchful and guarded in your actions than was she. She was more like Minnie in these respects. All who knew Mary Ermstead, loved her, and she never had occasion to mistrust a smile or kind word when it was offered her. I sought her society. I was willing to do any thing to please her, and my association with her was such that, before I was aware of it, she loved me. The first and purest affections of her generous faithful heart were given to me. I was proud to know it. I gloried in my conquest, but—understand

me—I had loved her first. I was young, and I knew not the value of such love."

He paused. There were no tears to moisten his rigid features. No—he had nerved himself against tears.

"But I know it now," he at length continued. "I was ignorant how deeply little things may wound loving hearts, and thoughtlessly—Heaven knows I meant no wrong!—yes, thoughtlessly, I turned all my attention to a heartless belle, who was, for the time, the center of attraction in our society. In this I never thought of loving her. I could not have done it. I only noticed her, as we eagerly watch the vanishing meteor, which dazzles but for a moment. As we turn from its transient glitter with greater admiration of the planet whose light is constant, though for the time less brilliant, so did I intend to return to the gentle girl whom for weeks I had almost neglected, and who had firm hold upon my affections,—how firm my life of agony alone has revealed.

"While I was thus trifling, unkindly, I will admit, I would not have exchanged one smile of Mary's for all the flattery which she whose favors I had turned to court, could have lavished upon me. It was folly, boyish folly, which influenced me, and when I came again to receive and reciprocate the love which I had not dreamed I could lose, I found it had changed. Pride had gained the mastery over it, and Mary's respect for me had gone. I was not *hated*, but *despised*. I made every effort to reinstate myself in her affections, but it was impossible—her studied coldness and neglect of me I could not overcome, and I became almost frantic.

"It was at so great and irremediable a sacrifice that I learned the noble nature of woman. I had believed her weak, and easily influenced, but I saw my mistake, and remorse has since been my constant companion.

It is this, Helen, that has poisoned all my happiness; this that has made me the strange, disagreeable person you have found me; and it was this forced me to forsake the pure religion to which you so resolutely cling. Earth has proved to me a place of unceasing torment, and I could not, would not, believe that a greater punishment than I was suffering, could exist. I saw the heart which I had been proud to possess, given to another, and when at the altar Mary vowed to love and cherish George Lincoln, I vowed to live and die unloved.

"The first years of her married life were spent in India. Twice I visited that country to look upon her face. I saw her, but she was unconscious of my presence, and after your father returned to this city I saw her often. Immediately after his death I visited her, and when I saw her in affliction I loved her more deeply than before, but she could not trust one whom she believed unfaithful. I saw her when in deep want, but she scorned the assistance I offered. I saw her miserable when I was able to do much for her comfort, but she would not receive assistance from me, and my own conduct was the cause of all this. I had poisoned her happiness and my own, and every luxury I procured was more powerful to torment me than the severest poverty could have been. I was numbered with the rich, but none was ever poorer in all that makes life desirable.

"I often rode by her home when she lived in the little brown house just out of the city, but she carefully prevented me from seeing her. As a last effort, I sought by a note, her forgiveness. It was granted, but with the forgiveness came the request that she should hear nothing further from me. Then I almost yielded to despair. I was present, the most sincere mourner at her burial, and I secretly caused a small headstone to be raised at her grave. Months after, when I was cer-

tain none would know of it, she was removed from the burying-place of the poor, and laid in a quiet corner of 'Greenwood.' The world is ignorant who sleeps in that grave, but it is not a forgotten spot: the choicest flowers have been strewn upon it, and tears of real, unaffected sorrow have watered it.

"As soon as the opportunity was presented, I found this happy home for Minnie, and it was through my influence that you were taken to Mr. White's, when so helpless, after that injury. Helen, I have done what I could. My honor was at stake, or I should have revealed to you that Minnie was your sister. Had you known it as a secret it would have afforded no happiness; but I have been continually hoping something might reveal it. Helen, I love you for your mother's sake, and for your own. Can you forgive as that mother forgave, and love me, now that I have confessed all, and repent?"

"I freely forgive," she replied, without a moment's hesitation; "but my love is given to another."

This was a second crushing of Doctor Duval's hopes, but his heart was schooled to endurance; forgiveness was sweet, and it lightened the disappointment which accompanied it.

Before that sun set Helen had read lines penned by a hand which had rested upon her infant head; had gazed upon the picture of features once dear to her, but which she had almost forgotten; and, with Doctor Duval, had stood beside the mound, beneath which all that is earthly of her mother was laid. Fresh flowers were smiling upon that quiet grave; a neat monument bearing no name told that the sleeper there had "passed that way to heaven;" and the now happy Helen kissed affectionately the hand of him who had so faithfully, but so strangely befriended her.

CHAPTER XL.

The investigation which Mr. Lee made of the disposal of Mr. Lincoln's property, revealed a heartlessness, and disregard for the welfare of others in Mr. Doxtater, which few are capable of manifesting. The limits of law, it is true, had not been overstepped, but honor and conscience had been wholly unconsulted. He to whom had been given the office of handing the helpless from affluence to penury, had not smoothed the way by kindness and care, nor avoided the thorns, which might have easily passed unnoticed, and thus have shielded the crushed heart from blows which it was in his power to avert. No, but from the wreck of another's misfortune he had gathered spoil in which himself might luxuriate, and with it had swelled the almost bursting coffers of his own treasures; but they who had bowed reverently before the shrine of his gold now despised its possessor.

To Mr. Doxtater's care Mr. Ashton had intrusted the first communications which revealed his love for Helen; but though he had seen her struggling for years against the fierce blasts of adversity, self-interest and pride had induced him to sacrifice honor—all that can give the slightest claim to the title, *man*—to quench the spark which might kindle the flame of her happiness.

Acquaintance and intercourse, even with those who fail to win our friendship or esteem, beget, at least, an

interest, and we love to listen to the story of their fortunes.

Parental influence is powerful, and the spirit of the parent often lives again in the breast of the child. From the training which Louise Doxtater had received it is easy to imagine her character. To restraint she was a stranger, and the injunction, "Honor thy father and thy mother" was unheeded by her. Gold had secured for her admirers, and, among them, the Frenchman whom her father had offended was the most constant. The efforts which were made by the parents to repel him only increased his determination, and Louise, mistaking this manifestation of will for love, and disappointed by the failure in her attempts to win Albert Lee, encouraged all his plans.

One cloudy, dark morning, Louise left her home. She was observed as she was passing out of the door, but her mother had, long before, learned that it was useless to interfere with her arrangements, and she did not question her respecting her errand. The hour for dinner came, but Louise did not appear, and the unsuitableness of the dress she had worn, for visiting, awakened her mother's suspicions. She went to her room to see if, perchance, she had not returned unobserved. A note directed to Mrs. Doxtater was lying upon the floor, directly before the door, where it could not fail to attract the attention of any person who should enter the room. With the intensest excitement she tore it open, and read as follows.

"My Dear Mother—For I do love you—and now as I am about to leave you, perhaps forever, my love is stronger than ever before. I have been unhappy at home. Love is unconquerable, and you and my father have tried, by every possible means, to separate me

from one who has my affections, and whom I have been for a long time determined to marry. Your own course has driven me to the step which I have taken. Instead of going to the theater last evening, as you supposed, with Mr. ——, I went to the parsonage in S—— street, where I was married to Monsieur Boutillier. Should you wish to learn any thing further of me, Mr. —— can give you the information, as we have made him our confidant, and authorized him to tell you all.

"Before you find this I shall be far out at sea, on my way to my home in Paris. If you forgive I may see you again; but if not, farewell forever.

"Your daughter,

"Louise Boutillier."

The vexation, mortification, and remorse of Mr. Doxtater's family were unbounded; but the hour for the departure of the steamer had not yet arrived, and Mr. Doxtater hastened to the wharf to detain, if possible, his daughter. He was *one minute* too late. He reached the wharf just as the great wheel made its first circuit in the water, and the unchained steamer pushed away in its freedom. Louise was standing upon deck, and, catching sight of her father, she waved her handkerchief, threw him one parting kiss, and turned from seeing him more.

CHAPTER XLI.

It was the Sabbath. The congregation had assembled earlier than usual in the church on —— street. The heavy organ sent forth a cheerful voluntary, which —he whose fingers directed the notes might have said —was a "Te Deum" or a "Gloria in Excelsis;" but there was a cheeriness to it which contradicted this. Holy hearts were there, which might have said they had come to worship God; but their countenances declared that the Invisible was not in all their thoughts; that, like the ancient Jews, they were momentarily expecting a being incarnate, who should appear in that "temple made with hands." There were smiles upon faces usually grave and solemn in the sanctuary, and ears open to every suggestion, which, on other Sabbaths, were deaf to all that is worldly.

Little Mrs. Rowe, who was a kind of secret spring working through her second half, the good old deacon, in the movement of the church machinery, had tarried a little in the porch after her coming. When, at length, she appeared, as she made her way to the deacon's pew, she cast significant glances, which all understood. The deacon himself, after she had whispered a moment to him, aroused to an unnatural gallantry, and opened the door of the newly-cushioned pew which had been prepared for the *pastor's family*, just as the pastor and his bride entered the church, accompanied by Harry and Mary Lee.

Mrs. Rowe's little black eyes sparkled like diamonds

in the sunlight, as she watched the head which was, a moment after, bowed devotionally; and, seemingly forgetful that the cold winds of November were blowing without, she untied her bonnet-strings, and began to sway rapidly the great feather fan which always hung at the end of the deacon's pew.

The people of Mr. Ashton's charge loved him, and many who, at his coming, had prayed that pastor and people might be closely knit together in the bonds of holy confidence, now prayed that they might not be suffered to set their affections unduly upon an earthly guide.

Mr. Ashton brought to his congregation, on that Sunday, equally precious promises with those which had, in former days, taken hold upon their hearts; but his efforts to gain their attention proved almost ineffectual.

When the hour for reflection came, even Deacon Rowe found himself almost destitute of new thoughts and hopes; and his evening prayer at home went up, freighted with confessions, and with an earnest plea to be forgiven for his wandering thoughts. His cheerful wife, also, whose piety, though genuine, was not of the character to add one jot to the length or solemnity of her plump little face, found a seat by the front window to be the most fitting place for her meditations; for the newly-purchased parsonage stood just on the opposite side of the street, and her thoughts were all there.

Mrs. Rowe's interest manifested for the parsonage, at this time, was natural enough. She had not wholly lost her delight at the happiness and surprise which she had witnessed the evening before, when the omnibus driver, contrary to Mr. Ashton's directions, turned for him to alight upon the left, instead of the right-hand side of the street. He had lived a long while in the

family of Deacon Rowe, and when he left a week before, to go for his expected bride, he went, with Mrs. Rowe's promise that he could occupy the north front-room of *her* house, if he desired.

There was an unusual sparkle to the kind lady's eyes when she made this promise to Mr. Ashton, but he thought it was occasioned by the delight which she felt in the prospect of seeing her pastor's wife. But those eyes sparkled more brightly, when, despite all his expostulations, he was set down across the street from his supposed home, and *she* opened the door, and welcomed him to a well-furnished *home of his own!*

Though it was late, and the company which Mr. Ashton had brought were weary, they could but accept Mrs. Rowe's invitation to look at the house. They followed her through all its apartments, and gratification soon overcame their weariness.

The neatly-furnished parlor, with its tasteful but modest chandelier, seemed a fitting reception-room for those who should desire to associate with the humble servant of the Most High. The airy and convenient "study," in one corner of which stood the pastor's scanty but thoroughly-read library, the companion of a large and judiciously-selected one which the congregation had delighted to present to him, invited him to enter it with a cheerful heart, and to search diligently for the true bread of life in their behalf.

The study-chair and secretary were presents from Mrs. Rowe, and as Mr. Ashton took his destined seat, he discovered on the floor, at his feet, a pair of beautifully embroidered slippers, whose lining of snowy silk, quilted in close diamonds, told him full plainly, that the delicate fingers of sweet Mary Rowe had not been unemployed in striving to promote his happiness.

In all these arrangements blind old "Father Ashton"

had not been forgotten. A convenient room had been fitted up for him, and there he sat in his great arm-chair, waiting to receive his new daughter, for he was too feeble to mingle with the company. After passing his hand lightly over Helen's features, and smoothing her hair, he kissed her forehead, and gave her a hearty welcome, and his richest blessing.

Like the face at once wreathed with smiles and bathed in tears, or rather, like the aged oak, whose strength is almost wasted, and whose long arms are dried and leafless, but from whose trunk a new and tender plant is springing, was that scene. The blood in the old man's veins coursed feebly; life glimmering, a single spark amid the gathering darkness of death, and the soul seemed wrestling with its clay, eager to wing its flight to its better home; but a young and vigorous shoot from the parent stock had risen, and was just now entering upon the brightest day of life. "In him, though he were dead," should that father live, and growing arms of usefulness were stretching to cover the places from whence the dried branches had fallen away.

The new home was a parsonage only as it was a pastor's dwelling. The deed of the property was presented to Helen by Mr. Lee, who considered that, in so doing, he made but a slight return for the assistance which in former years he had received from her father. He wept as he thought of the sorrows which had been sown in the pathway of his favorite, but smiles sported unpityingly with those tear-drops, for she was then gathering a harvest of joy.

At the parsonage Doctor Duval was not an unfrequent nor an unwelcome visitor. The bitterness of remorse which had poisoned his happiness for years, had been partially washed away by the tears of repentance—the beloved counterpart of the one he had injured had be-

come his forgiving, faithful friend, and the vow made in despair, he had no desire to break.

Calmer moments were granted to him, and his once troubled spirit rested thankfully in the quiet. His mind, which, through its blindfolded eyes, had caught indistinct and strange impressions of the workings of Him who rules all things, saw clearer and more correctly with an unobstructed vision, and the cloudy noonday was melting into a clear and tranquil evening.

The sunniness of mirth never sported on his countenance; gayety was a stranger to him, but a calm, quiet peace was the atmosphere in which he breathed. Like the ocean when the winds are chained, he rested; like the violet, when the storm is over, he lifted his drooping head; while, like the repentant, pardoned culprit, he knew the woe of sin.

Many Sundays had come and gone since that one on which Deacon Rowe's devotions were so disturbed; the cushion in the pastor's pew had become worn; the slippers, the silken lining of which Mary so carefully quilted, no longer "beautified the feet of him who preached the Gospel of peace;" the sightless eyes of the beloved sire saw clearly in the daylight of heaven, but no dark day had ever dawned upon the inmates of the parsonage.

Wealth might have brought them greater luxuries; worldly honor might have feasted their pride, and the laurels of fame might have added a transient beauty to their brows, but holy hearts are insensible to these, and Helen Ashton was happy.

THE END.

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